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COMMENTARY

ON THE

REVELATION

OF

St. J O H N.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY *BRYCE JOHNSTON, D. D.*

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT HOLYWOOD.

A NEW EDITION.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

A MEMOIR OF THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

BY

THE REV. JOHN JOHNSTONE,

MINISTER OF CROSSMICHAE.

VOL. I.

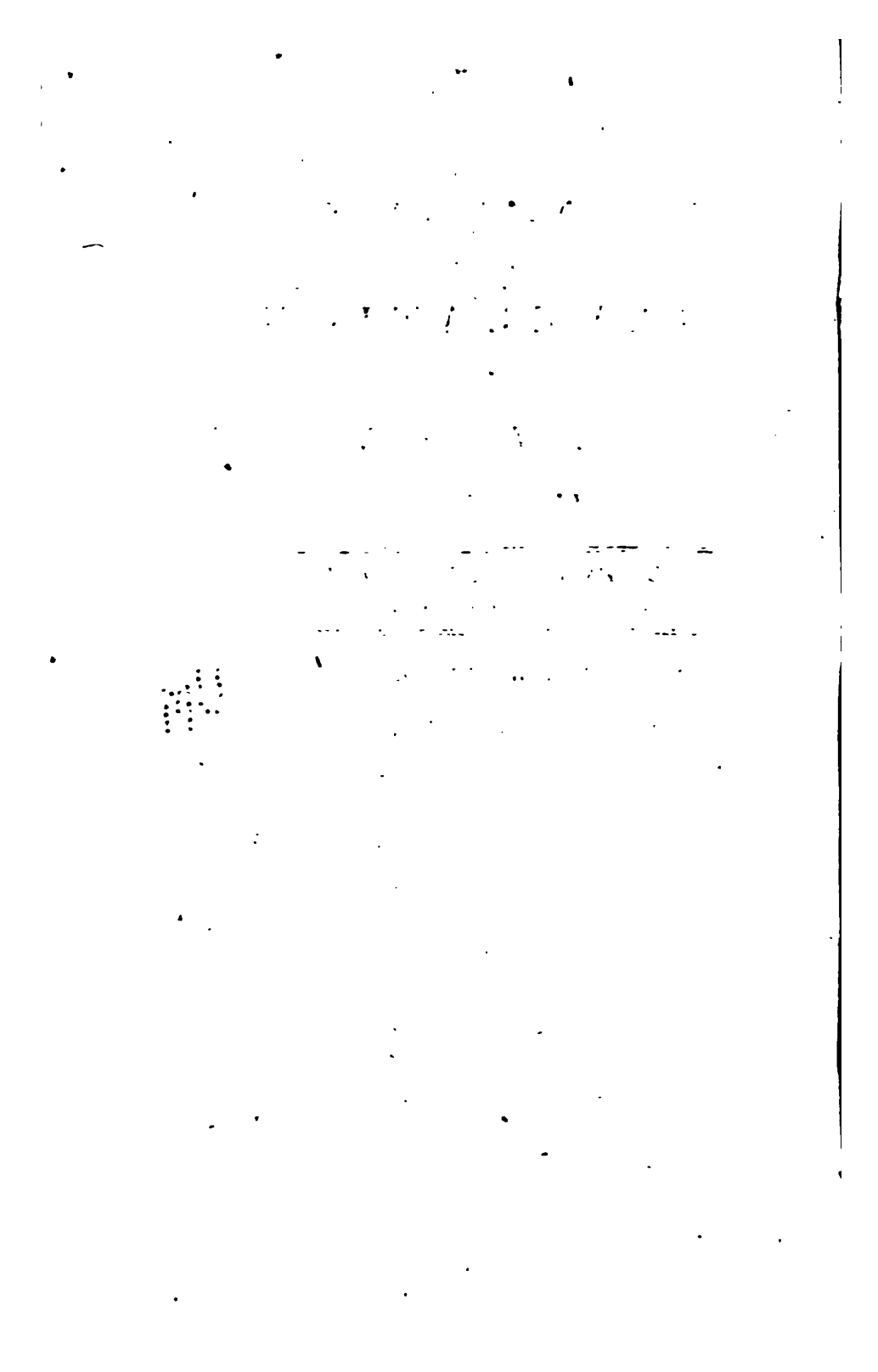
EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR WILLIAM CRECH.

SOLD BY

T. CADELL & W. DAVIES, LONDON.

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MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS

OF THE

REV. BRYCE JOHNSTON, D. D.

THE events which befall a country clergyman are seldom sufficiently striking and diversified to engage the research of the biographer, or to gratify the curiosity which may lead to the perusal of his pages. His personal improvement and professional duties are his chief employments; and it is within the precincts of his own family, and the



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narrow circle of his friends, that he unbends his mind, and is furnished with opportunities of exhibiting the appropriate features of his character. His situation is not calculated to bring into exercise those passions by which the men of the world are roused to exertions which arrest its notice ; and these passions, if he feels the power of the doctrines which he is bound to investigate and to teach, he is irresistibly determined to restrain and subdue. Seldom can he attain celebrity, while the honour which men bestow is postponed in his esteem to that which cometh from God. Seldom can he rise above dependance, while the rules of his order, his principles, and his voluntary engagements, forbid the use of those means by which he might augment the scanty revenue which the law hath provided.

But though these remarks admit of general application in the Scottish Church, some of her members, by the force of superior talents, or by peculiar circumstances in their lot, have been found to move in a less humble sphere. Of this description, was the subject of the following Memoir.

For more than a century, his family have possessed a small estate within the royalty of Annan, in the county of Dumfries, and have successively been in the magistracy and council of that burgh. His father, John Johnston of Gutterbraes, repeatedly filled the office of Provost or chief Magistrate; and by his fidelity and uprightness in that station, and by the virtues which adorned his private character, acquired very considerable reputation and influence, and preserved them entire to the close of life. He married Elizabeth, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Howie minister of Annan, the savor of whose name is still dear to those by whom his zeal and diligence are remembered. The offspring of this marriage were eight sons and two daughters. Bryce, the youngest of the sons, was born at Annan March 2. 1747. At a very early period, he discovered a strong predilection for the profession of his maternal grandfather; and seemed even then to have had it put into his heart to form a resolution, which his parents had no wish to oppose, and in which, as he advanced in years, he was firm

and unshaken. At the parochial school, he received the elementary principles of education, and failed not to distinguish himself by his docility and application. November 15. 1762, he entered on his academical studies at the university of Edinburgh, and was enabled to prosecute them with rapidity, and without interruption. The circumstances and the influence of his father, prevented him from being doomed, like most of his brethren in early life, to the drudgery of teaching, as the instrument of obtaining present subsistence and future preferment.

At that time, the different chairs in the university were filled, (as they have since been,) by men of eminent talents and learning, and their prelections were attended by youths destined to distinction in all the departments of literature and science. Under such instructors, and associated with such competitors to rouse emulation, it was not likely that a mind such as that of our author, should repose in indolence, or fail to expand and increase its powers. While some are less ambitious to have something to say than they are to say it well;

while they prefer the meretricious ornaments of style and composition to the former substance of doctrine and of truth, his constant aim was to acquire that knowledge which is of avail in the profession to which he pointed, and a facility of compressing his thoughts with energy and clearness. Endued by nature with talents for extemporary speaking, he was wont to exercise and improve them in those societies which our academical youth form for their mutual benefit. The characters of those who were the intimate companions of his private hours, shew his mind and heart to have been under the controul of those religious and moral principles, which were found to be the guides and the consolation of his future days.

During his last session at College, he was unexpectedly called for a season to relinquish the prosecution of his studies. After a short illness, which, at taking leave of him only a few weeks before, there was no reason to anticipate, his venerable father fell asleep in Jesus, December 3, 1798. Having attended to perform the last tender offices of filial duty;

having joined in the general regret which the event awakened, and administered consolation to the surviving members of his family, he returned to the seat of learning; and at the close of the sessions, he finished the course of study prescribed by the laws of the church. Thereafter he was taken on trial by the presbytery of Annan; and having acquitted himself to their entire satisfaction, was licensed by them to preach the gospel, as a probationer for the holy ministry, October 4. 1769.

Invested now with a public character, he was to give decisive proofs that he was not unworthy of it. To the standards of the Church, he had adhibited his solemn subscription, regarding them not merely as articles of peace, or qualifications for office, but because they were indeed the confession of his own faith. Consonant to these, and to the word of God, on which they are founded, were the earliest as well as the latest discourses which he prepared for the pulpit. Fitted thus to be an acceptable and popular preacher, such doubtless he became. In him

the adage, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country, received no confirmation. Though his labours were begun where he had almost constantly resided, and where his principles and conduct, if they had been chargeable with unsoundness and corruption, could not fail to be known, wherever he appeared to officiate occasionally, crowded audiences assembled, and were dismissed under deep impressions of satisfaction and gratitude. That popularity which followed him, he neither courted nor despised: His mind was above the influence of that silly passion which is gratified by empty applause; and he was too well informed not to perceive, that a good name, obtained by honourable means, is a powerful instrument of usefulness.

In the rank of a probationer, he was not long to remain. God had prepared a people for him; and, in the course of providence, his introduction among them was secured. The Rev. Thomas Hamilton had long exercised the functions of the ministry in the parish of Holywood; and being now full of years, and

unfit for labour, was solicitous that the charge of his flock should devolve on a faithful assistant and successor. Mr Johnston was made known to him ; and was found, upon trial, fully to come up to his expectations, and those of his people. In April 1771, the aged pastor retired to spend the evening of his days in Glasgow, reserving to himself a small portion only of the emoluments of the benefice. With the unanimous consent of the patron, heritors, elders, and congregation, Mr Johnston was, August 22. 1771, ordained to the office of the holy ministry, by the presbytery of Dumfries, within whose bounds Holywood is situated. This is the only church preferment he ever obtained. Frequently, indeed, he might have been translated to a more lucrative, or to a more conspicuous station. But he found himself at once in his place, among a people whose call he had received and accepted, and whose esteem and attachment were to be commensurate with his own zeal, and fidelity, and diligence.

At the time of his settlement, the manse, or parsonage house, was in ruins. Till a new one should be erected, he found it necessary to board in a decent family in the parish. This circumstance contributed to enable him afterwards to make those active exertions, not strictly professional, by which he was to improve his own condition, and to extend his usefulness as a member of society. With almost undivided attention, he devoted this early period of his life to the acquisition of useful knowledge, to the discharge of public duty, and to the culture and improvement of his own heart and character. In that department of the service of our church which is called lecturing, the result of his researches and reflections was given in unpremeditated language, suggested during the progress of delivery. But for many years, his sermons were generally composed and mandated with care. As his memory was uncommonly strong and retentive, he never had occasion to exhibit his manuscript in the pulpit, or even to avail himself of a compend or abridgment in the form of notes. Whether dis-

discourses read or pronounced are to be preferred, is a question which has been agitated keenly both by critics and by the body of ordinary hearers. But the question admits not of solution, since all men do not possess the same faculties in the same degree. They whose diffidence is invincible, or who, without an expence of time and labour incompatible with other duties, cannot preach without the aid of paper, are not reprehensible for having recourse to this expedient. But where there exists no defect or decay of the necessary powers, it must be allowed, that, by the opposite practice, a public speaker may render himself more acceptable and more impressive. The ends of all eloquence are to convince or to persuade. These ends, no man at the bar, in the senate, or in any popular assembly, expects to attain by a cool recitation of manuscripts brought into view. It is with men also, that the pulpit orator has to do, and therefore he cannot reasonably hope, that, by opposite means, his purpose is to be accomplished. In so far as he undertakes to inform the understanding, the prac-

time admitted in the churches of this kingdom may be resorted to with advantage. But if he would awaken the affections and determine the conduct; if he would rouse the secure, and strike terror into the guilty conscience; if he would stimulate the slothful, and soothe into peace the mourner in Zion, his eloquence must assume a higher and more impassioned tone.

Such was that of our youthful messenger of grace and truth. What he delivered came from the heart, and seemed to come from it. While he was in the habit of writing regularly, scarcely a topic of the Christian system, whether it related to faith or to practice, was left untouched. By this early diligence, he accumulated treasures, from which he could afterwards bring forth at pleasure things both new and old. Nor did his application to study interfere with the execution of the plan that he had adopted for performing the more private pastoral duties. From the earliest to the latest days of his ministry, he was regular and assiduous in visiting the families committed to his care, in catechising the young and

the aged, in superintending and examining the schools of the district, in investigating the intellectual and moral attainments of those who desired admission to sealing ordinances, in counselling and reproving the thoughtless and unwary, and in pouring the balm of consolation into the hearts of the afflicted and the dying.

When he had fully established his reputation, the university of Edinburgh, without any solicitation on his part, unanimously conferred on him the degree of Doctor in Divinity, June 12. 1786.

The ecclesiastical establishment, to which he belonged, presented a favourable field for the exercise and display of his talents. The constitution of the church of Scotland assigns to every individual of the sacred order, the same series of pastoral labour, the same rank in society, the same measure of legislative, judicial, and executive authority. At the æra of the Reformation, it assumed this republican form. In turbulent times it had been repeatedly assailed by the arm of power, or corrupted by the

innovating spirit of faction. But in 1688, the claims of the country to the restoration of presbytery were distinctly recognised by the Revolution settlement; and, in 1707, the articles of Union between the two kingdoms, into which this island had till then been divided, declared the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government of this church to be fixed and unalterable.

To speculative men it may perhaps appear, that, to render her thus independent of the state, was to erect an *imperium in imperio*, and to reverse that order which, in other countries, is supposed essential to the existence of government and civil society. But the subject has been brought to the test of experience; and the alarms of theory have been quieted by the irresistible evidence of fact. Precluded from exorbitant measures of wealth or power, and associated with laymen as constituent members of all the ecclesiastical courts, the clergy of this church are effectually restrained from being formidable in their stations. Blessed with the fostering care of the sovereigns who have successively

been exalted to the throne, they have been led, by gratitude and principle, to be loyal themselves, and to inculcate loyalty on the people under their charge. In whatever else there may have existed diversities of opinion among them, their official communications with the throne, their public discourses, and their private deportment, have fully established their claim to a continuance of that protection, and of those immunities which have been secured to them by the constitution, and by the laws of the land. Its times of danger, they have uniformly stood firm and unanimous; and particularly during rebellions raised by the adherents of a family who had forfeited the crown, and, more recently, when men given to change were inclined to fraternize with those whose revolutionary phrenzy had made desolate a neighbouring kingdom.

But among so numerous a body, possessed of cultivated minds, permitted to think for themselves, and publicly to express the result of their reflections, some differences of opinion, some collision of interests might natu-

rally be expected to take place. It has accordingly happened, that, like the members of all popular assemblies, they have arranged themselves into separate parties. This separation has arisen from the different views they have taken of what is most expedient in the regulation of their internal affairs. To discover and to execute the best plan for introducing pastors into vacant charges, has proved the great bone of contention. Some have been of opinion, that the right of election belongs to the people at large, or may with advantage be vested in them. Some, more aristocratically inclined, have been for committing it to the landed proprietors and elders; and some have been willing to recognise the right of patrons to bestow what is of patrimonial interest, while the church is secured in her powers to judge of the qualifications of candidates for the ministry, and to establish or to dissolve the pastoral relation between them and their flocks. These several opinions have, at different periods, had their abettors in the senate and in the executive govern-

ment of the country, and the law of the land has varied accordingly.

For more than a century, there have been only two acts of parliament, the merits of which have been brought into competition in the judicatories of the church. Whatever may have been the sentiments and wishes of some of the people, the expediency of popular elections has scarcely been defended by any who have held official situations. Their attention has been confined to Act 23d, Parl. 3. William and Mary, concerning patronages, and to *anno decimo, Annae Reginae*, 'An act to restore the patrons to their ancient rights of presenting ministers to the churches vacant in that part of Great Britain called Scotland.'

By the former of these acts, the heritors being protestants and the elders, were to propose a person to the whole congregation to be approved or disapproved by them; and if reasons of disapprobation were given in, these were to be cognosced by the presbytery of the bounds, at whose judgement the calling and entry of a particular minister was to be

ordered and concluded. In 1712, this act was repealed, and patrons were to resume the exercise of their ancient powers.

What thus became the law of the land was extremely unpalatable to the church. They pronounced it a grievance, from which they laboured to obtain relief. But in process of time, the minds of many were reconciled to the new order of things; and they formed themselves into a party gradually increasing in numbers and in strength, whose professed object was to defend, to obey, and to enforce the law of the country. Still, however, there remained a considerable number from whom they received a systematic opposition. According to his views of this leading question, every entrant into the ministry has been put down as belonging to the one party or to the other. Accustomed thus to take counsel together on a particular subject, a bond of union may still be traced among men, after the question on which they were originally associated hath ceased to be agitated.

It was to those who had espoused the popular cause, that the subject of this Memoir

was led by principle, and mature reflection, to attach himself from his introduction into public life. Never hath that cause had a more able and zealous advocate, or those who differed from him a more candid and fair opponent. He had studied with care our ecclesiastical constitution and laws; and it was universally allowed, even by those whose measures he resisted, that no man ever understood them better. At an early period he obtained an ascendant in the inferior judicatories of which he was a member, and was recognised as eminently qualified to controut their counsels, and to guide their decisions. The confidence which his presbytery reposed in his ability, public spirit, and uprightness, led them to return him, more frequently than any of his brethren, as one of their representatives in the General Assembly. In that supreme court, he soon rose to celebrity, by the strength of his arguments, by the thunders of his eloquence, and by his invincible attachment to the principles he had espoused.

For several years after he became a minister, the idea of applying to the Legislature

for the repeal of the Act 10th of Queen Ann, had not been relinquished. Some public bodies in the country, and more especially many private individuals, and self-constituted societies, from time to time, expressed their aversion to the existing law ; and through the influence of those in the inferior judicatories, who agreed with them in opinion, overtures on the subject were presented to the notice of the General Assembly. These overtures were generally received with suspicion, and alarm by the party which, under the late Principal Robertson, had acquired, and was anxious to preserve, the majority in that house. In the course of the discussions which took place, arguments were brought forward which varied with the complexion of the times. It was contended, on the one hand, that patronage, whether good or bad in itself, is the law of the land, and that, as loyal and peaceable subjects, we are bound to submit to its authority ; that the circumstances of an established church are materially different from those of one unconnected with the state, depending for the support of its ministers on

the voluntary contributions of the people; that when the state makes a fixed provision for an order of men to officiate in holy things, the laws of the state should regulate the mode of their introduction to their offices; that the clerical character is in danger of being degraded, and that polite literature and liberality of sentiment may be retarded in their progress, if the clergy are laid under the necessity of accommodating their discourses and their style of manners, to the taste of the vulgar, to whom they are to look up for preferment; that the powers of patrons are not formidable, since their choice is limited to *qualified persons*, who must previously have the stamp of the church upon them in their license to preach, and must afterwards be taken upon trials, and approved of, before they can receive induction to their charges.

Such arguments as these our author and his friends were not afraid to meet and to combat. They solemnly abjured every intention of resisting the government, or disturbing the peace of their country. Patronage, they acknowledged to be the law esta-

published ; but they contended that the same authority which gave it existence was sufficient to repeal it, and that to take legal and constitutional steps for the repeal of any law, the pressure of which may be felt, is the undoubted and unalienable privilege of Britons. They argued that it had uniformly been the sense of the church, that this law should be repealed, since, from the date of its enactment to the year 1784, every general assembly had directed and empowered its commission to *make application* to the King and Parliament for redress of *the grievance of patronage, in case a favourable opportunity for so doing should occur during the subsistence of that commission.* It was contended, and by none more strenuously than by Dr Johnston, that the Revolution settlement was intended to give a permanent form to our constitution both in church and state ; that the platform of our ecclesiastical government then received an appropriate and indelible character ; that the plan of settling ministers according to the Act 1690, became a part of those rights and privileges which the articles of Union

between the two kingdoms had declared to be fixed and unalterable; that an Act passed five years after, under the influence of a tory ministry, enemies to liberty, and to the Hanoverian succession, was to be regarded as a breach of the compact between the two great contracting parties, and, if acquiesced in, without remonstrance, might serve as a precedent for bereaving us of all the freedom and glory which have descended to us as an inheritance purchased by the struggles, the wisdom, and the blood of our fathers. This law alone, it was said, has occasioned the secessions from the church which have taken place; and that if secessions shall continue and increase, the great body of the people may attach themselves to incapable instructors, and the clergy of the establishment left without flocks, over whom they may exert their influence, may, by the state, be regarded as of no use, and as having forfeited their claim to protection and support. As to their improvement in learning and politeness, that may be expected to keep pace with the progress of society, and can neither be accel-

ated nor retarded by the laws which regulate the mode of their introduction to office; and besides, if at present they are not tempted servilely to court popular applause, it must be allowed they are in danger of despising it too much, and of assimilating their manners to those of the great, and becoming the submissive sycophants of men in power. As to the powers of the church to put her stamp on those eligible to the sacred office, and to judge of their fitness for particular charges, this is a two edged weapon, and may be wielded on either side of the contest; if it be at all a check, it is a check on public bodies, as well as on patrons, in selecting the objects of their favour.

On such grounds as these, the opposition to patronage was long conducted. But the friends of that law continuing to fortify themselves, by disseminating their principles among the younger clergy and by the countenance which they received from the officers of state, and from the landed interest, the opposition became gradually feebler, and was soon to

cease. In the Assembly 1785, our Author, who had long been regarded as a leader among his friends, was active in bringing forward and supporting a proposal to consult the landed interest and royal burghs of Scotland, on their sentiments concerning the existing law; it being understood, that if the result of this appeal to the country should prove against them, they at whose instigation it was made, should consider themselves as in future released from any obligation to agitate the question. A negative was put on this plausible overture; and since that time, no formal attempt has been made to revive the discussion of the subject.

But if the expediency of the law itself has led to division in the deliberative councils of the church, her sons have found an equally fruitful source of debate, when called, in their judicial capacity, to investigate and to apply the principles on which the law is to be carried into execution. Though a patron be recognised as invested with power to present to a vacant charge, it is on all hands admitted that his choice is limited to a *qualified*

person; and that the presentee acquires no right to be settled otherwise than according to the rules of the church. But what are the qualifications which the candidate must possess, and what are the rules which must be obeyed? These are questions, in the solution of which a wide diversity of sentiment has taken place. That every entrant into the ministry must have received a licence to preach as a probationer for the sacred office, and must give a pledge of his loyalty, by taking the oaths to government; that he must possess a competent portion of literature, and that he may be set aside if he refuse his subscription to the established standard of orthodoxy, or is convicted of immoralities, which infer the deprivation of his licence; these are the points on which all are agreed. But it has been contended farther, that he must receive a call from the congregation to which he is presented, before the church, according to her rules, can establish a pastoral relation between him and them. Some of the more zealous supporters of the ruling party have maintained, that the present law

has transferred to patrons all the powers which formerly belonged to heritors, elders, and people; that, therefore, a call is a form without meaning, a shadow without a substance, an insult on congregations, who, though invited to consent, must ultimately be constrained to submit. But the most temperate of their friends have subscribed to the doctrine of their opponents, that calls were established before patronage existed, and that being rules of the church, must be observed in order to give legal effect to presentations. In the Assembly 1782, our Author distinguished himself by supporting this doctrine, and had the satisfaction to see a declaratory act on the subject sanctioned by its authority.

But though immemorial usage, and express statute, had thus imposed a necessity for the moderation of calls, it remained to be considered, in the case of contested settlements, what ought to be sustained as a call. This point was keenly agitated, both while the question relative to patronage itself was undecided, and after that question had been put

to rest. From year to year appeals were brought up from the inferior judicatories by parishes reluctant to receive the legal presentee. The decisions of the Supreme Court were almost uniformly in favour of the settlement; but opposition was made on the grounds, that if a call was requisite, a blank paper, or one to which a few subscriptions were adhibited, did not sufficiently accord to the rules of the church; that to sustain it, was to sacrifice her authority, and to exhibit a glaring solecism, by establishing a relation where there was only one party consenting. But as opposition to the law itself had been found insufficient, so opposition to the execution of the law, as thus interpreted, was found to be equally so, and came in process of time to be relinquished as hopeless.

While causes of this description continued to be brought up by parties having interest in the decision, our Author had frequent opportunities of strenuously maintaining his favourite doctrine. In some cases he moved that the call should be set aside, and the presentee declared unqualified for the particular

vacant charge. In other instances, he proposed that the cause should be remitted to the radical court, with instructions to deal with the parish, and to endeavour to obtain a more ample concurrence. In former times, such conciliatory measures had been frequently adopted with success. But the times were altered, and were now unable to bear them. The last struggle of the kind which took place, was in the Assembly 1781; and it is worthy of notice, on account of the change in ecclesiastical administration by which it was soon after succeeded. A very few individuals only, (to whom strong objections were stated) had subscribed a call to the presantee to the parish of Biggar. The matter came before the court of dernier resort. When that court had deliberated long upon it, Principal Robertson made his usual motion, that the call should be sustained, and the settlement carried into effect with all convenient speed. A counter motion was made, that the cause should be remitted, with instructions to the presbytery of Biggar to endeavour to obtain a more ample call; and so

powerfully was the expediency of this measure urged, that the celebrated leader of the ruling party rose to express his inclination to accede to it. By this concession, he seemed to establish his claim to the character of a *moderate man*. But an uproar ensued, and many voices were raised in unison, to charge him with a dereliction of his principles, and to inform him that if he was thus to desert his friends, he was not in future to look to them for support. He rose considerably agitated, and said that he felt himself in an awkward situation, that his right hand was fighting against his left; but that since the concession he had made, for the purpose of reconciling all sides of the house, had not been attended with the desired effect, he felt himself under the necessity of adhering to his right hand, and of supporting, by his suffrage, his original motion. After a long debate, that motion was put and carried. It was the opinion of many at the time, that this eminent man, convinced that the party he had trained were disposed to adopt stronger measures than he found congenial to his own

mind, began to perceive it to be expedient for him to retire from the bustle of ecclesiastical politics. It is impossible perhaps to discover, nor is it proper to dive into the motives which led to the resolution to which he afterwards inflexibly adhered. Certain it is, that, while still in the full possession of his extraordinary powers, and while he might still have retained his influence, he never accepted a seat in any but the immediately subsequent assembly, but chose to devote the residue of his days to the instruction of his flock, to the interest of the celebrated university over which he presided, to domestic enjoyment, and to the composition of the last of those works which are to confer immortality on his name.

When the principles of a constitution are distinctly traced and settled, it is the chief business of those who understand and are attached to these principles, to act upon them, and to resist innovations by which they may be corrupted or lost. It is the lot of all human institutions to be stopped in their progress towards perfection, and gradually to

tend to decay. Permanency is not therefore to be expected to characterise the institutions of the church of Scotland. Both of the parties, which have contended for the administration of its government, have charged each other with an innovating spirit; and out of these charges have arisen the chief general subjects of debate; which of late years have been presented to the notice of the public. The popular party has been charged with giving too much countenance to Chapels of Ease, and thereby introducing an anomaly into the constitution. They, on the other hand, have recriminated, by maintaining that their opponents have adopted measures hostile to that purity which is essential to a Presbyterian church.

A Chapel of Ease is an erection within the pale of the establishment. The congregation is at the expence of erecting it; and of supporting the minister. He is called by themselves uncontrolled by a patron, but their choice is limited to those who are qualified to accept a parochial charge. He is in-

ducted to his office, by the presbytery of the bounds, but is disqualified from acting as a constituent or elected member of the ecclesiastical judicatories.

Two causes chiefly have led to the erection of Chapels of Ease. *1st*, They have taken place in parishes, the charge of which, by reason of their great extent, or overflowing population, have been found too weighty for the established ministers. *2^{dly}*, They have been solicited by those who have been reluctant to submit to settlements made under the law of patronage, as interpreted and enforced by the decisions of the General Assembly.

When it has been satisfactorily established that the former of these causes has led to particular applications, the sanction of the church has been readily obtained. But the ruling party has been generally disposed to refuse petitions from such as have expressed dissatisfaction with those whom the law of the land hath provided to instruct them. It has been argued, that, by granting such petitions, all the evils incident to popular elections may be brought on a certain portion of

the clergy and of the people; that the hands of the parochial minister are weakened by his rival for the affections of his flock; and that he is deprived of the prospect of overcoming, by his fidelity and diligence, the aversion with which it was his misfortune at first to be received. On the other hand, it has been said that secessions and schisms are always alarming, and ought, as far as possible, to be prevented; that the mild spirit of our laws permits those who choose not to attend their established teachers, to choose others for themselves; that when they have formed a determination to do so, it is better policy to retain them in communion with ourselves, than to drive them for refuge to those of whose principles we have no pledge, and over whom we have no controul; that in Chapels of Ease both ministers and people continue subject to the authority of the parent church; that if the dispensation of the word and of the ordinances of religion be promoted, the most important of all ends is attained; that the funds for the support of the poor are increased by such erections; and

that the ministers, to whom they open a door of usefulness, will be restrained from giving offence to their brethren, or to patrons, while they naturally look forward to charges on the establishment as more eligible than those they hold. On these and similar grounds, the popular party have defended their attachment to Chapels of Ease, and, in many instances, their exertions have been attended with success.

Into these views Dr Johnston zealously entered. In particular, in the Assembly 1779, when he began to take an active part in the conduct of business, he contributed to the triumph of his friends over the opposition made to the admission of the chapel at Dunfermline, and of Lady Glenorchy's at Edinburgh, into the bosom of the church. Many years have elapsed since the decisions in these causes were pronounced; and it cannot with truth be said, that they have produced effects unfavourable to the interests of religion, or to the peace of the country.

But the powers that be, still regarding such erections with a jealous eye, or anxious for

uniformity in decisions respecting them, turned their attention, a few years ago, to the construction of a general law by which they should be governed. It was formerly competent for presbyteries, in the first instance, to authorise the erection of Chapels of Ease within their own bounds. But in the year 1798, it was enacted, that they should be permitted to take only certain preliminary steps, and that a final judgement should not be given without the special directions of the Assembly. To the passing of this law, it was objected, that it did not accord with the general spirit of the constitution, which invested presbyteries with the power of judging, in the first instance, in all matters within their own bounds; powers which could not be formidable, because their sentences might, by dissent or appeal, be brought under review, and reversed, if found to have been wrong; that if the practice of the Assembly's acting as a radical court, instead of a court of review, should be introduced, they might in time be loaded with more business than they could possibly overtake; that in

cases attended with no doubt or difficulty, parties having interest would be subjected unreasonably to trouble, expence, and delay; and that reluctance to these might lead many to withdraw themselves from the church, who, otherwise, might have continued in its communion. But these and other objections were over-ruled. The law was passed, and must be obeyed. It is of too recent a date to render it possible to argue from experience on its wisdom and utility.

Another question of general concern has of late years been no less keenly agitated. The constitution and laws of the church prohibit plurality of benefices and the non-residence of the clergy. No attempt has yet been made to unite two or more ecclesiastical benefices in the same person. But it has been held that the emoluments provided by law are too scanty to rouse and reward the exertions of men of genius; and that, therefore, it is expedient that some of this description should be permitted, along with their pastoral charges, to fill chairs in the universities. It cannot be denied that there are some of

these academical situations which clergymen are best qualified to fill, and that there are some clergymen, who, by their local situation, abilities, and diligence, are able to fill them without neglecting, or performing in a careless or superficial manner, the duties of their sacred office. But when the literary or scientific employment to be assigned, is altogether uncongenial with their proper studies; when it is such as is calculated to fill up the whole time of any ordinary man; when it would remove him for a considerable part of the year from the flock of whom he hath taken the oversight, it has to many appeared to be their bounden duty to resist the measure. They have thought it unconstitutional that a professor in a university should be permitted to accept of a parish at a distance from the seat of the university, or that a minister in such a parish should receive an academical chair without resigning his parochial charge.

No new legislative provision has been proposed; but various cases have been brought forward in which the principles in question

have been involved. In the discussions which have taken place, our author had opportunities of exerting his powers, and of defending what he conceived to be the best interests of the church. He had no predilection for levelling doctrines, but he considered the charge of souls as too weighty to be sacrificed, in any instance, to the temporal advantage of any individual, however worthy of promotion, and was anxious to repress that ambition which might exalt a few above their brethren, or prove the engine of creating an undue influence in the church.

In the trial of private causes, which occupy a considerable portion of the time and attention of the ecclesiastical courts, he acted as became an upright and impartial judge. In the application of law, he discovered great acuteness and candour, and delivered his opinion and his vote, without respect of persons, according to the light of his own mind. On such occasions he derived peculiar advantages from his superior knowledge of those forms which are the handmaids of justice, from the facility with which he

could resort to precedents, when occasion required, from his acquaintance with the general principles of jurisprudence, and with the municipal laws of his country. In debate, he was vehement and earnest; but whatever judgement his manner might lead strangers to form, he did not lose command of his temper. Bold and intrepid, and conscious of the rectitude of his intentions, he resisted measures of which he did not approve, and combated the arguments of those who opposed him; but he never descended to personal invective. In the course of public business, he was ready to meet the highest legal officers on their own ground, and was often allowed to have come off victorious. On one occasion, it was said by the then Lord Advocate of Scotland, that though he was not a lawyer by profession, he was the best natural lawyer he had ever met.

But on this part of the subject it may be thought perhaps that too much has been said. It must, however, be allowed that no satisfactory account can be given of a public cha-

racter without adverting to the public trans-
 actions in which he was engaged. The great-
 er part of those which have been referred to
 are in the recollection of professional men.
 But there are many who hear of the meet-
 ings of ecclesiastical courts without being
 able to conjecture in what their members are
 employed. Of the events which are to com-
 pose the materials of our modern church his-
 tory, there are as yet but few authentic ac-
 counts. Impartial men are consequently in-
 capable of judging how far the most designa-
 tions assumed by one party, and assigned by
 them to their opponents, are properly de-
 scriptive of their several tempers and prin-
 ciples. Such were the active duties connected
 with his office, which, according to his ordi-
 nation vows, our author undertook to per-
 form. Those who knew him best, or who
 knew the eminence which he attained, must
 allow, that though his attention had been ex-
 clusively devoted to them, he could not have
 performed them better, or be said to have
 lived in vain. But by a most exact and

economical distribution of his time, he was able to devote a portion of it to pursuits not strictly professional. Intimately acquainted, as has been said, with the laws of his country, and possessed of uncommon quickness and accuracy in business, he not only conducted his own affairs with discretion and success, but was able also to evince to others his obliging and benevolent disposition. Persons of all ranks sought his counsel, and reposed on it with the fullest confidence. He prevented many, who were in danger of being involved in law-suits, from thus wasting their substance; and many he reconciled to each other, who might otherwise have broken the bond of peace. In temporal, as well as in spiritual things, he spoke among his people as one having authority. While to the rich and the powerful, he often rendered essential service, by his skill in affairs and his business talents, he had peculiar pleasure in devoting them to the service of the poor. By his interposition in their behalf, the widow and the fatherless were protected from oppression, or saved from ruin. What had descended to

them, or had been earned by their industry, and might have been lost by their ignorance, he watched over as with a parent's care, and saw properly applied. Through his patronage, young persons were brought forward in life, and placed in situations which originally they had no prospect of attaining.

He ranked among the most eminent agriculturists of his time. In early life he had discovered a taste for rural affairs, and chose afterwards to devote to them some of those leisure hours which others spend without censure in company or amusement. About the year 1771, (as is mentioned in his statistical account of Holywood,) a spirit of improvement appeared in the parish, when the farms became larger than they had formerly been. He contributed to rouse this spirit, and to accelerate its progress. He took in lease some portions of land conveniently situated, which had from time immemorial been rugged and barren, and brought them gradually into a highly cultivated and productive state. As it pleased God, that in all he did he prospered, he purchased from time to time part of

the lands he had occupied as tenant, and others which he saw to be susceptible of improvement. His advice and example had powerful effects on the industry of the district in which he resided; and to his judgment and efforts it is indebted for the removal of some of the most formidable obstacles to its success. To augment the internal resources of a country has ever been considered, in a political point of view, as of the highest importance. When we reflect on the hardships to which the lower orders of the people are subjected in times of scarcity, it must be allowed that to provide against them is a becoming exercise of Christian prudence and charity.

Directed by such principles as these, Dr Johnston's skill and experience in rural affairs proved signal instruments of usefulness. He was consulted by the Board of Agriculture on the best means of preventing the return of those calamities which had been felt in the years 1799, 1800, 1801. They voted to him their thanks and a piece of plate, as testimonies of their sense of the value of the communications he had made.

But he was able to render his talents as a farmer and a country gentleman, more directly subservient to the interests of the gospel. The Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, having resolved to vest part of their increasing capital in land, turned their view to him, as best qualified to direct them in carrying this salutary measure into effect. They purchased at the rates at which he had appreciated them, the estates of Whitecastle, in the shire of Lanark, Glenridel, in the shire of Dumfries, and Thraive Grange, in the stewartry of Kirkcudbright. The two last of these estates he took under his own management. He directed the improvement of them, let the leases, superintended the operations of the tenants, uplifted and remitted the rents, all without any fee or reward. That part of the Society's capital which was thus secured, is already more than double in value, and must continue to increase progressively, whereas money lent at interest must suffer depreciation in proportion as the country advances in prosperity. On each of the estates in Dum-

fries-shire and Galloway-shire, a school was erected soon after they had changed their proprietors; and at these schools many young persons have been successfully instructed in the ordinary branches of education, and in the principles and duties of our holy religion. The directors of the society, abundantly convinced of the importance of Dr Johnston's services, gave the most handsome testimonies of their approbation and gratitude; and generations unborn will have reason to bless the power that raised him up to co-operate in labours of love, with one of the most respectable and useful institutions that ever existed in this or any other country. He did more to strengthen their hands than many who have been in circumstances to bestow splendid donations and legacies. As a landed proprietor, he was associated with the freeholders, commissioners of supply, and heritors of his native county. He had thus opportunities of promoting its general improvement, its good government and peace. His public spirit, loyalty, and attachment to the British constitution were

well known to the noblemen and gentlemen in whose deliberations it was his right and privilege to bear a part. He was not among the least zealous to support lawful authority, and, in times of peculiar danger, to guard the realm against the attack of domestic and of foreign foes. Whether he had to deliver his sentiments on public measures, or was called on for pecuniary aid, he was ready to prove, that the man who fears God will honour the king, and avoid meddling with those who are given to change.

Such a variety of active engagements may seem to have required the sacrifice of a considerable portion of time : But the whole of those hours, during which he was absent from his flock or his study, were not lost to the interests of both. While superintending the labourers employed by him, or travelling to places where his presence was required, he frequently revolved in his mind the important subjects on which he was to address his congregation, or posterity. He does not seem in early life to have formed any design of becoming an author : But the pressing solici-

tions of those who considered the knowledge he had acquired as too precious to be lost, and his own conviction that he might ~~thus~~ become more extensively useful to mankind, disposed him to become their instructor from the press. The subjects upon which he chose to write are in themselves highly important, and such as he had investigated with care, and fully understood.

Of his works that which was produced at the greatest expence of time and labour, is, A Commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, in 2 vols. octavo, published at Edinburgh 1794.

The Apocalypse is less generally studied and understood than any other portion of the word of God. The unlearned reader approaches it with solemn awe; and when he finds it to baffle his powers of interpretation, is ready to shut it in despair. Even of those who are addicted to theological researches, many have been led to conclude, that it must be left to the course of events to reprove the veil of mystery thrown over the predictions.

by which they are announced.' But if the authenticity and inspiration of this book be established, as they are, by irrefragable proofs, if we are forbidden to expect a new revelation by which it is to be explained, we must be chargeable with wilful ignorance, if we avail not ourselves of the means of information that are in our power. 'The Gospel is hid from them that are lost.' But they whose senses and understandings are daily exercised, may by it be made wise unto salvation: It were absurd to suppose that the Father of lights hath addressed a benighted world, in unintelligible terms; or that the truths to which he requires their assent are placed beyond all human search. A concealed revelation is a solecism in language. As well may we defend the practice of giving the scriptures to the people in an unknown tongue, as suppose that, in any part of these scriptures, an impenetrable medium is used for the transmission of thought. True it is, that no man will read savingly and to profit, who is not guided by the Holy Spirit into all truth. But this celestial agent doth not

now manifest his power and presence by such miraculous impulses as were made on the senses, and on the minds of the prophets, evangelists, and apostles of old. He that would be benefited by his ordinary influences, must stir up the gift that is in him, and exert the intellectual and moral powers which the Author of nature hath bestowed.

Convinced of these truths, our author considered the sense and meaning of this seemingly dark and mysterious book as discoverable by himself, and considered it as his duty to unfold them to the people committed to his charge. We are informed in the introduction to his work, that, in the years 1785 and 1786, he delivered from the pulpit a course of Lectures on the whole of the Revelation. These, though not committed to writing, were the result of deep thought and enlightened research. They arrested the attention of crowded audiences, and were highly acceptable and useful. He returned afterwards, with new ardor, to the important study, and, in the year 1789, formed the resolution of giving to the world the substance

of his Lectures, in the form of a Commentary. 'With great attention (says he,) and, 'if I know my own heart, with great candor, and with prayer to God for his direction and blessing, I examined all the prophetic writings in the Old and the New Testament, in order to discover whether or not there is any one peculiar idiom or fixed character of prophetic writings, any characteristic features in which they all agree. I soon found that two peculiar features marked all prophecies. The first, that they are written in the symbolical language; and the second, that all prophetic writings, of any considerable length, are interspersed with keys or explanatory parts, written in alphabetical language. These keys are always introduced by an angel, or by a peculiar expression directing the attention of the reader to them, such as here is wisdom *!'

* Intr. page 3.

Having thus ascertained the principle on which he was to proceed, he applied it to the sacred text, and was satisfied that the application was just in every instance. Of the prophecies which he had to unfold some respect events, which have taken place since John beheld them in vision. This commentator states them as recorded by authentic historians. Every reader, as he proceeds, may mark the coincidence of the facts with the predictions of the Seer of Patmos. Others of the events, for which the apostle was inspired to prepare the world, are still in the womb of futurity. But confidence may well be reposed in principles so successfully applied, where they could be brought to the test of experience. And it were rash and uncandid to assimilate him by whom the application is made, to those commentators of whose faculties imagination is the most powerful, who have conjectured shrewdly, but are as frequently mistaken as correct.

The work before us is interspersed with practical observations naturally arising out of the subjects explained. These may be less

acceptable to the critical student, or the curious reader; but they were considered by the pious author himself as according with the great design of the book which he had undertaken to elucidate, and evidently tending, under the divine blessing, to promote the best dispositions of the heart of man.

It is impossible to give a full analysis of the work without transgressing the limits within which this paper must be confined. It has already been favourably received by many whose approbation is decisive of its merit. Eminent divines and private Christians in this kingdom have perused it with satisfaction and profit. An intention of publishing an edition of it in America has been lately announced in the newspapers of the United States; and it may be safely presumed that its fame will be commensurate with its circulation. By it the theological student may make a valuable addition to his library. Men given to investigations which lie out of the ordinary line of reading, or actuated by that propensity in our nature which prompts us to pry into the

transactions of future ages, may expect to be gratified in no common degree. And they who study and would act for eternity, may hope, by the blessing from on high, that their views of divine truth will be enlarged, that their faith will increase in strength, and that their hearts will be made better.

While the author of this work was engaged in composing it, and after he had committed it to the press, public affairs assumed an aspect unusually striking and awful. He could not be an indifferent observer of events which are to render the age in which he lived one of the most memorable epochs in the annals of the world. He had marked the progress of the French revolution, and was sensible of the danger with which this and other nations were threatened by the propagation of the principles that led to it. Whatever oppression the inhabitants of other countries might have experienced, whatever, in their political institutions or established religions, might require reform, he saw no just reason for that discontent and love of change, which

had begun to pervade this favoured land. But the fact was too palpable to pass unnoticed, that Britain, like France, was likely to become a nation of politicians and statesmen, that the lower orders of the people, seduced by the arts of those who assumed the appellation of their friends, were tempted to relinquish the proper duties of their stations, to wrest the sceptre from their monarch's hands, and to plunge their country in all the horrors of anarchy and sedition. He clearly perceived the tendency of leveling principles, and the imperious necessity of opposing them. With this view, in 1801, He published in one vol. 12mo, an essay on the way to restore and perpetuate peace, good order, and prosperity among the nations.

In the introduction to this work, he adverts to the convulsed state of Europe, and other quarters of the globe; and justly observes that 'an effect so great, so universal, and so hurtful to the individual and to society, must proceed from a cause equally great, universal, and bad.' The cause he assigns is, ignorance of the real nature and

obligations of *true* religion, and of civil society and civil government. To effect a cure of the existing disease, he enters on a discussion of the topics, in which men as rational and accountable beings, and as related by social compact, have the greatest need to be instructed. The Essay is divided into four chapters. The 1st treats of religion. 2d, Of civil society and civil government. 3d, Of the influence of religion on civil society and civil government. 4th, On the necessity of that influence, in the present state of the nations, to restore peace, good order, and prosperity. In the illustration of these topics will be found a compendious view of those truths which are revealed by the oracles of God, much sound philosophy, and close reasoning, much to satisfy an inquiring mind, and to establish loyalty, subordination, and contentment on a solid basis. This essay ought not to be ranked among the fugitive pamphlets which are generated by the heat of political controversy. Its doctrines are interesting to mankind, whatever

revolutions may take place in their forms of government, or whatever may be the state of their public affairs. They are peculiarly interesting to Britons, whose understandings may be safely addressed, who are not to be forced into submission by the high hand of power, but will be subject to their king, and attached to their country, while attempts to disseminate error in opinion, and to subvert the foundations of morality are, successfully opposed. It is a false peace which the people are not willing to maintain. Over their minds the clergy possess no inconsiderable influence; and in the late turbulent times, they gave decisive proofs that they wished not to abuse it. The Essay before us is a memorial of its author's desire to render his talents and popularity subservient to the public weal, when a general rage for political speculations had begun to take place, when the tenets of scepticism and false philosophy had ceased to be taught in the unknown tongue of metaphysical jargon, when publications subversive of faith and morals were brought down to the level of unlearned understandings,

and industriously introduced into the shop of the artificer, and the cottage of the peasant, he acted as became him, when he offered to his fellow citizens a manual which may with safety be perused. Since it was written the aspect of the times seem to have altered for the better. French principles have been unfolded by their effects. They who had indulged themselves with dreams of equal liberty, and equal measures of power, have reposed from their tumults under a military despotism; and they to whom they had tendered a participation of their blessings, may perceive themselves to have been marked out by a bold usurper to bleed by his arms, or at his nod to cultivate the provinces of his unwieldy empire. These things the inhabitants of this country seem to have had good sense to perceive. Sedition and discontent have given place to unanimous exertion in the public service; and there is ground of hope, that the measures of the executive government, and the courage and conduct of patriot fleets and armies may prove instruments of deliverance in the hour of danger,

and lead, in due time, to a permanent and honourable peace. But still it is meet that we bear in mind that it is only by adhering to principle, or by restoring it when corrupted or lost, that our soothing hopes can be realised.

The doctrines inculcated in the work reviewed, were by the author brought forward from the pulpit, particularly on days of national fasting, and other public occasions. He directed the attention of his audience to the judgments sent abroad in the earth, to the improvement to be made of the dispensations of providence, and to the means of obtaining relief and safety. At the desire of his hearers, he published separately several of these discourses, as those on Micah vi. 6. 9. Amos iv. 6, Psal. lxxxvi. 13, 14. He published also in 1786, a sermon entitled, The purpose for which Christ came into the world, from John x. 10. preached before the Society in Scotland for Propagating Christian Knowledge, at their anniversary meeting in the High Church of Edinburgh: And a sermon on the Divine Authority and En-

couragement of Missions from the Christians to the Heathen, preached in Holywood church, Nov. 16th 1797.

These were the only discourses published by himself. A volume is now offered to the public. Its contents are not selected by the editor according to his own judgment, from the numerous manuscripts of which he is in possession. The testamentary deed, by which they were conveyed to him, contains a clause, that none were to be published excepting such as were marked for that purpose. This clause was wisely framed to prevent that improper use which is too frequently made of the papers of literary men, who have descended to the grave. Incorrect judgment, or ill-directed affection, has served to introduce to the public compositions on which their authors would not have rested their reputation; and in not a few instances, books have been made up for sale, the merits or blemishes of which have been those of the editors. In the present posthumous publication no imposition is attempted. A few verbal alterations have been made,

but neither the sentiment, arrangement, nor peculiar style of the author have been changed. The manuscripts were found in that state in which he had intended to deliver them to his printer, if it had pleased God to prolong his health and life a month beyond the time at which he entered into rest. The discourses will be acceptable to those who read for the purpose of being made wiser and better. The peculiar doctrines of the Gospel are explicitly set forth, and, with much acute and ingenious reasoning, are shewn to be philosophically true. The volume contains many important and interesting practical exhortations. It opens just and pleasing views of the plans of providence respecting the Mediator's kingdom on earth; and is calculated to rouse the exertions of the subjects of that kingdom to forward the execution of these benevolent and gracious plans. In some of the discourses will be found sound counsel and warning suited to the present circumstances of this country, and which, under God, may prepare its inhabitants for being saved, through his mercy,

from the ruin which their manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved. The style of the sermons is perspicuous, forcible, and plain. A fastidious critic may wish it had been more richly loaded with those rhetorical embellishments which so generally belong to modern publications. But it was not for persons of this description that the author wrote. Less ambitious to please than to profit, he preferred plainness of speech to the *enticing words of man's wisdom*. What he said himself on this subject may here be appositely quoted. 'If a great variety of necessary duties had afforded me more time, the language might have been better polished. But I hope it is such as shall convey the sentiments to the reader without disgusting him; and, if that shall be the case, I trust my time hath been as well employed in many necessary duties, as it would have been in merely rounding a period*.'

* Int. to Com. p. 18.

Besides the works mentioned in the line of his professional studies, and many others not inferior in merit, the greater part of which the prohibition in his will must withhold from public view, Dr Johnstone found leisure to communicate his sentiments to men, on some subjects connected with their temporal interests. He was among the first to second Sir John Sinclair's patriotic views of drawing the Statistical Account of Scotland; and, from the materials furnished by him, the account of Holywood was prepared, which, with those of three other parishes, were circulated as specimens of the intended publication. In the year 1794, he drew up for the Board of Agriculture, 'A general view of the Agriculture of the county of Dumfries, with observations on the means of its improvement.' This paper contains much useful matter, and was honoured with the marked approbation of the Board. Additions were afterwards made with a view to republication in an octavo volume.

On many other subjects he was equally qualified to write. In particular, it has been often regretted by his friends, that he did not find leisure to delineate the constitution of the church of Scotland, and to furnish institutes of its law. These, the members of the ecclesiastical courts, and the lawyers who have occasion to practise in them, daily experience to be desiderata, and no man would have been better able to supply them. But the life of a man is too short for the execution of vast designs; and his, alas! was not to attain the period assigned to many.

In general he had been blessed with good health. Occasionally he had been visited with inflammatory complaints, occasioned chiefly by his exertions in public duty. For about two years before his death, he was more exhausted than formerly by these exertions, yet his heart was so much engaged, that, after he had begun to speak, he forgot his increasing feebleness, nor was it perceptible by his hearers that he stood so much in need of relaxation and ease. About the middle of

March 1805, he was seized with a rose fever, by which, for three weeks, he was confined to the house. Neither his friends, nor those who attended him were apprehensive of serious consequences, and God seemed pleased to restore him. April 1st, he rode out a little; and next day, feeling himself nearly quite well, he attended the presbytery of Dumfries, and was elected a member of the ensuing General Assembly. To the meeting of that court the public looked forward with expectation unusually earnest; and he anticipated an opportunity of co-operating with his friends to promote the triumph of liberality and justice. But before that meeting took place, he was to join the General Assembly and Church of the first born, which are written in heaven. Till the 20th day of the month, he was able to devote his time as usual to study, to business, and to intercourse with his friends. When he went to the pulpit, for the last time, he was so extremely feeble, that he purposed to give only one short discourse: But when he reached

the church, he felt himself strengthened to extend the service to the ordinary length.— ‘Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ’ were the words from which his people were then addressed by him, whose voice they were no more to hear in the sanctuary below. That grace and truth had come to himself was to be proven by his dying testimony to the faithfulness of him who hath brought in these glad tidings of great joy. Rapid was the decay of his animal powers. His physicians could not assign any marked disease as the immediate cause; but said it was nature giving way at once. Their opinion coincided with his own; for he said, ‘My great exertions in my divine Master’s work have broken down one of the strongest constitutions in the country; but I do not grudge it: I am willing to spend and to be spent for his sake.’ Though his bodily frame had thus lost its vigour, the faculties of his mind and the serenity of his temper remained entire. To his relatives who were present, and to all about him, he

he administered consolation and seasonable counsel. With fervour he joined in acts of devotion, and expressed the strength of his faith, the rejoicing which flowed from the testimony of his conscience, and his firm confidence in the hope set before him, as an anchor to his soul both sure and stedfast. Towards the close of the scene, when it was observed that his hands hung down, 'yes,' said he faintly, 'but I shall soon lift them up.' At last, about eleven o'clock of the morning of Saturday April 27. 1805, fifty-six days after he had completed the fifty-eighth year of his age, he resigned his spirit, without a struggle, or groan, or change of countenance, into the arms of him who has been spared to remember and to record his virtues.

In point of bodily constitution he was highly indebted to the Author of nature. His stature was six feet. In early life his form was slender; but after he had recovered from a fever in the year 1772, he became rather corpulent, though not unwieldy. He

trode the earth with a manly firmness, and had a dignity in his aspect that commanded respect. His countenance was open, and his eye beamed with kindness; though, by his abhorrence of vice or meanness, it could be made to flash indignation. By a regimen equally remote from abstemiousness and excess, by regular exercise, and by placid equanimity, he did ample justice to his natural advantages. He never sat for his portrait, though he would have furnished an excellent subject to the pencil of an artist.

He was never married, yet his benevolence wanted not objects towards whom it was directed. Great was his filial piety to his venerable mother, who died in faith only ten months before himself, in the ninety-seventh year of her age. To his other relatives he was ever kind and attentive. He administered counsel and aid in the time of need. He spared neither labour nor money to promote the execution of plans for the good of his country and the advancement of the gospel. His establishment was suited to the

circumstances in which providence had placed him. But he knew too well what is required of a steward to waste in extravagance, or empty shew, what is capable of being applied to far nobler purposes. He was eminently given to hospitality; and his guests found under his roof an intellectual feast prepared for them. The cheerfulness of his temper; his great flow of spirits, and his uncommon powers of conversation were decisive proofs that real religion has no tendency to inspire gloom and melancholy. He possessed the friendship and esteem of many of the most respectable characters of the age. His intercourse with them was calculated at once to edify and to please. Anxious that none should be neglected, for whom duty and affection disposed him to provide, he executed accurate and judicious settlements of his worldly affairs ten years before the period of his death.

Of his intellectual and moral faculties and attainments, a better estimate may be formed from the preceding details than from an at-

tempt to concentrate them in one point of view. It may not, however, be improper to annex to this paper the concluding part of a sermon preached after his funeral in the church of Holywood, May 12. 1805.

AND now, Brethren, what shall I say more? Shall I dismiss you to prosecute in retirement the train of meditation into which we have been led? The claims of duty and of affection forbid our immediate separation. For, since you were last assembled in this house of prayer, an event has taken place too striking and solemn to be passed over in silence. The disposer of all things hath taken to himself one who was long to us all an object of veneration, and of cordial attachment.

To his memory a public tribute of respect is due.

Your late worthy and beloved pastor was descended from parents who belonged to the Lord, and was furnished with resources, in the morning of life, which it is not the lot of all to enjoy. He was prepared, by domestic instruction and example, for the station he was afterwards to fill and adorn; and commended to that God, who, in answer to the prayers of the faithful, causeth his blessing to rest upon their seed. He discovered an early predilection for the sacred office; and engaged with ardour in those studies which were to prepare him for its important and arduous duties. At the university, he found his place among the most promising young men of his time, and gave early presages of that eminence he was destined to attain in maturer years. Indeed, the talents which the God of nature had bestowed were such as required but culture and grace to bring them into full effect. His understanding was uncommonly sound and vigorous; his

apprehension was so quick, that, into subjects the most abstruse, he could penetrate as it were by an intuitive glance. His memory was retentive and powerful, and, from the treasures it contained, things both new and old were produced at pleasure as occasion required.

But if his intellectual endowments, and his acquisitions in literature and science were large and respectable, the moral qualities of his heart and life were fitted to secure, in his behalf, the esteem and affection of all by whom he was known. In the ordinary transactions of life, he conducted himself on the strictest principles of honour and integrity. Precision in business and activity in lawful pursuits were not regarded as beneath his notice; for he could use the world, and keep it in its place, so as not to abuse it. He guided his affairs with discretion; and if, in whatsoever he did, he prospered, he received independence and augmented means of doing good as gifts of God. In the tender relations of domestic life, and in the general

intercourse of society, the ample stores of his mind, his cheerful and affectionate temper, the effusions of his lively fancy, his unshaken fidelity, his fervent benevolence, formed him to impart and to enjoy no common portion of felicity. Beneath his hospitable roof, the stranger found himself at home; they that were in doubt could repose on his advice; and the poor that sought his bounty, or that sought it not, were not sent empty away.

But the work of the ministry was that in which his soul delighted, and to which he directed his chief attention. In obedience to your call, he entered into his labours in early life; and the experience of many now gathered to their fathers, and of many who still survive is registered in heaven, to bear witness, in the day of the Lord, to his faithfulness, and ability, and unwearied perseverance. Determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified, he never amused you with cunningly devised fables, or the tenets of a philosophy, falsely so

called. Out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth spake of the things which belong to your peace. The everlasting truths, the holy precepts, the awful threatenings, the exceeding great and precious promises of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, it was his heart's desire, and his invariable practice, to make known among you. He preached the unsearchable riches of Christ, and boldly declared the whole counsel of God.—Nor did he require of you any sacrifices or exertions which he himself was reluctant to make. On that sure foundation which was laid in Zion, he built his own faith, and all his hope of pardon and peace.—As he published the doctrines of grace, so it was grace wherein he was made to stand.—His conduct was correct, and uniform, and consistent.—His piety was unaffected, but unmingled with bigotry.—He was tenacious of his principles, but his liberality of sentiment, and his charity towards those who differed from him, were not thereby obstructed or impaired. His life adorned the doctrine of God,

his Saviour; and reflected with lustre, increasing with its progress, the image of his maker impressed upon his soul.

In the judicatories of the church, he stood forth to defend the bulwarks of our Zion. His intimate knowledge of our ecclesiastical constitution, and the energy and intrepid boldness with which he supported it, have long been recognised and acknowledged even by those whom he opposed; and, when party spirit stood not in the way, his decisions were received with gratitude and deference.

Nor did the multiplicity of his active engagements interrupt his private researches, or prevent him from composing works by which, though dead, he shall continue to speak to generations unborn.

Suited to such a life, devoted to God and to man, was the death which hath removed him to his rest. It is not a vague and uncertain report I bring to your ears: For I was favoured to be an eye and an ear witness of the solemn, the affecting, the edifying

scene. Though his constitution had been worn out by his great exertions in his divine master's cause, the Lord was pleased that the powers of his mind should remain unbroken, and that he should not be detained long under the rod. But his affliction was sanctified, and brought him near to God.—In a season which admits not of dissimulation; in the silent watches of the night, when a few hours only were to elapse before he was numbered with the dead, he was strengthened to give the most decided testimony to the truth and excellence of that gospel he had preached; to declare his long experience of its sanctifying and its saving power, and to state the grounds on which he departed in joy to meet his Judge. “Long, (said he),
“ have I felt the power of real religion on
“ my heart and conduct, but never more
“ than since I was visited with this sickness,
“ which may prove unto death. For more
“ than thirty years, I have preached among
“ my people the doctrine of salvation; not a
“ nominal salvation, but that which is

“ through faith in the imputed righteousness
“ of Christ, and wrought out by the agency
“ of the Spirit of God. This doctrine, I
“ trust, has been blessed to many; and this
“ is my ground of hope and joy, that I shall
“ be found, not having mine own righteousness,
“ ness, but the righteousness which is of God
“ by faith. I *know*, that I shall attain the full
“ stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus:
“ I have been hungering and thirsting after
“ righteousness, and now I *shall* be filled.
“ In the prospect of an eternal world, I can
“ say,—As to me to live hath been Christ,
“ so to die will be gain.”

“ Mark the perfect man, and behold the
“ upright, for the end of that man is peace.”

And now I have spoken to you with simplicity, and, God is my witness, I have spoken from the heart: But I trust my words will be regarded as more than the tribute of affection and gratitude. True it is, I was nearly related to your departed pastor by the ties of blood; and of all the numerous objects of his attention and beneficence, there

never existed one whom he laid under greater obligations than myself. He was the protector of my father's orphan house, and a willing instrument of our deliverance from penury and want. He was the faithful guardian of my helpless years,—the director of my studies,—and active in promoting my successful introduction into public life. His counsels in conversation and correspondence, his example, and his prayers, were directed to excite me to act with credit to myself, and usefulness to others. To me, he ever was an instructive and agreeable companion, a faithful, though gentle reprover; a rejoicer with me in my happier hours; and the sympathetic soother of my sorrows. In his last moments, he had on his spirit the welfare of my soul, of my family, of my flock; and, with those lips which were soon to be sealed by death, he expressed his heart's desire that we might be saved.

On these accounts, and on more than these, an apology would be found for me in every candid mind, though I had overlooked or

concealed some palpable blemishes in his character, and pronounced a panegyric which a more dispassionate observer would have been compelled to disclaim. But his character has stood the test of severer examination than mine, and is above my praise: Your attention and your tears are witnesses for me, that I may have come short, but have not exceeded, the dictates of truth and justice. His praise is in the churches. Many of you, I trust, are his epistle; the epistle of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; and God, the Judge of all, hath fixed his eternal condition.

I might, therefore, leave the sacred place, where I now stand; but I beg your patience for a moment while I advert to the circumstances which render it painful for me to bid you adieu. Many peaceful, and profitable, and happy days, have I spent among you. In this pulpit I began my labours as a preacher of the gospel. To you I have spoken more frequently than to any other con-

gregation, except that which is my dear peculiar charge. On twenty-two solemn occasions, I have assisted here, in the ministry of holy things, and joined with you in commemorating our Saviour's dying love, over the symbols of his broken body and shed blood. Nor have I ever had reason to complain of indifference or disregard. Many are the pleasing proofs I have had of your attachment, but none do I value more than your uniformly respectful attention to my feeble labours for the good of your souls.

The bond is broken which so long united us. But our common Lord is the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever; and though you, among whom I have come preaching the kingdom of God, may see my face no more, we may still, through grace, consider ourselves as fellow members of the household of faith, and fellow travellers towards the Jerusalem that is above.—“And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to keep you from falling, and to build you up, and to give you

an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Sorrow not as those who have no hope. Take heed to the things you have heard in time past, lest at any time you let them slip. Regard your minister, though dead, as still speaking. He hath fallen asleep, but the word of God liveth, and abideth for ever. And the divine head of the Church, with whom is the residue of the spirit, can provide for you by raising up a pastor after his own heart,—one faithful to the charge of souls,—one that may not need to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. For one of this description, let your prayers ascend to the throne of grace; and may he whom the father heareth always, present them, and obtain, through his own merits, an answer of peace! Beware of blind attachment to human instruments, or implicit trust in the means of grace. Say not, “I am of Paul, and I am of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” Is Christ divided, or will he divide with his ministring servants the glory obtained by the salvation of men? He it is alone who can

give the increase, and if ye ask, ye shall doubtless receive it. Keep near to him. Be steadfast in his covenant. Be followers of them that are inheriting the promises. Be followers of their faith, and patience, and obedience, and ye shall follow them to the realms of bliss. "Only let your conversation be, as it becometh the gospel of Christ, that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel. Finally, brethren, farewell; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and, in life, at death, and through eternity, the God of love and of peace shall be with you."

INTRODUCTION.

HAVING explained all the other parts of the New Testament, in the course of my lecturing to the parishioners of Holywood, I considered it my duty, as a minister of the gospel in that parish, to explain also the book of the Revelation. No part of inspired scripture is more fully proven to belong to the sacred canon than this book hath been. Those who desire to see that proof may consult Sir Isaac Newton's Observations on the Revelation, Lardner's Credibility of Gospel-history, and Millii Prolegomena. This prophecy bears the strongest internal evidence, that no subsequent prophecy should be necessary in order to unfold the meaning of this one, but that it should be discovered by the right use
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of ordinary means, chap. xxii. 10. In chap. i. 3. all men are called upon, by a regard for their own happiness, to read, hear, study, and obey the words of this prophecy.

In the years 1785 and 1786, I delivered a course of lectures on the whole of this book. These were not committed to writing; I afterwards examined all the writers on the Revelation, who had come to my knowledge; many of whom were men of great abilities, learning, worth, and reputation. But I never met with one who explained that book upon fixed and established principles, or who unfolded its true and connected meaning. For want of such principles of interpretation, their writings were rather conjectures than explanations. Many of them, indeed, were, like the persons who made them, very sagacious; and hence in many parts they hit upon the truth. If I had found a just and complete explanation of that book, on fixed and rational principles, in the writings of a Vitringa, a Sir Isaac Newton, a Lord Napier, a Lowman, or any other commentator, I should never have troubled the public with my opinion on this important subject, though

though it is one in which we are all deeply interested. Having never met with such a commentary, I resolved, in the year 1789, to write out one on that book; the same in substance with the course of lectures which I had delivered upon it three years before. With great attention, and, if I know my own heart, with great candour, and with prayer to God for his direction and blessing, I examined all the prophetic writings in the Old and the New Testament, in order to discover whether or not there is any one peculiar idiom or fixed character of prophetic writings, any characteristic features in which they all agree. I soon found that two peculiar features marked all prophecies. The first, that they are written in the symbolical language; and the second, that all prophetic writings, of any considerable length are interspersed with keys or explanatory parts, written in alphabetical language. These keys are always introduced by an angel, or by a particular expression directing the attention of the reader to them; such as, "here is wisdom," Rev. xiii. 18. xvii. 9.

Though the language of China, and of some few other parts of the world, is a kind of symbolical language, yet that language in its perfection is now to be found only in the prophetic writings. From them a grammar and a dictionary of that language may easily be formed. No language is first formed from a grammar and a dictionary, but these are made from the pre-existing language.

There are two characters in this language. The one is uniformly called an hieroglyphic, and the other a symbol, in the commentary. An hieroglyphic is a complete figure made up of the assemblage of two or more parts into one picture. An example of a hieroglyphic may be seen in chap. i. from the middle of verse 12. to the end of verse 16. And a symbol is a single detached member, such for instance as a candlestick, a star, or a two-edged sword. Every prophet, in whatever country or age he wrote, always used the same hieroglyphic, or the same symbol, to signify the same thing, without a single exception.

From this usage may be seen in fact, what reason teaches us to expect, that the meaning
of

INTRODUCTION.

of symbols is much more fixed and uniform than that of words is in any alphabetical language. Alphabetical characters and words are not natural but only arbitrary signs, and therefore may and do change with the changes of times and of men; but hieroglyphics and symbols are either pictures of things actually existing or of ideas which these things naturally excite, and therefore not arbitrary but natural signs, fixed and permanent as the things themselves. For the same reason, the symbolical is an universal language. Every alphabetical language is local and changeable. For instance the Greek, the Latin, the Italian, the Spanish, the French, and the English languages, were or are each the language of a particular district of territory, and are altogether unintelligible to the illiterate inhabitants of any other district; and they have all undergone such changes, that the language of one period is scarcely intelligible to the inhabitants of the same country in another period of time. But shew the picture of a star, of a candlestick, of a sword, or of a horse and his rider, to any man of any country or age, and he will be at no loss to tell

tell you what it represents. Shew these to an intelligent and thinking man, of whatever country or period he is an inhabitant, and he will readily tell you what ideas they excite in his mind. He will read these symbols with the same ease and certainty with which he reads historical painting, though it had been drawn by a person who had lived in a country or age far distant from his, and had spoken a language which he does not understand.

As an universal and unchangeable language, the symbolical must be the most fit language for prophecies intended for all countries and ages: And who can so well form the keys for opening up the intricacies of prophecies as that God who knows all their parts? They, like the intricate wards of the lock which they are to open, must be fixed and permanent, and must not change with the fancies of man. In the commentary, I have explained the meaning of every hieroglyphic or symbol the first time it occurred in the book of Revelation, and whenever it appeared again I have used it in the same sense; taking it for granted that the reader will

will recollect the interpretation which was given of it on its first appearance. Whenever the same hieroglyphic or symbol occurred, it hath always been used in the same sense, which is a strong proof that it hath been rightly interpreted. It will also appear in the commentary, that the symbols and hieroglyphics are used in the same sense in the prophecies of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of Ezekiel, of Daniel, of Hosea, of Paul, and of Peter, in which they are used by John in this book.

The book of Revelation consists of two great or general divisions. These are made by Christ himself, when, chap. i. 19. he said to John, "Write the things which thou hast seen, even the things which *are*, and the things which shall *be hereafter*."

1st, "The things which *are*," or the history of things which were then in existence. Chap. i. is a general introduction to the whole book, and chap. ii. and iii. are the historical part, relating to the present state of the seven Christian churches then in Asia.

And, 2^d, "The things which *shall be hereafter*," or prophecies of future events.

These fill up all the remainder of the book,
from

from the beginning of the fourth chapter. The prophecies of this book are of that species which is called *vision*. This is the clearest kind of prophecy. It is like the testimony of the sense of sight. The impressions were made upon the mind of John by the Spirit of God, in the same way, and of the same nature with those which would have been made, if he had actually seen with his bodily eyes the very objects themselves, which are represented by the various visions which are narrated in this book.

These prophecies were revealed to John in fourteen distinct and successive visions: But they seem to have been all communicated to him in the same place, the isle of Patmos, and in the space of one Lord's day. In chap. i. 9, 10, 11, he expressly says that he was in the isle of Patmos, and that it was on the Lord's day, when he saw the visions which he was commanded to write in a book, and to send to the seven churches in Asia. That book, as is shewn in the commentary, is the whole book of the Revelation. In no part of that book does he mention any other place or time, in which any of these visions were

were made to him. He repeatedly specifies the particular scenes of particular visions: Such for instance, as chap. x. 2. "his right foot upon the *sea*, and his left foot on the *earth* ; chap. xiii. 1. "the sand of the *sea*;" chap. xiv. 1. "Mount Zion;" chap. xvii. 3. "the wilderness;" and chap. xxi. 10. "a great and high mountain." But, as is fully shewn in the commentary, all these scenes represent the particular times when the events predicted in these particular visions shall actually happen, and neither the times nor places in which these visions appeared to John.

The following are the fourteen visions, into which the prophecies of this book are divided, as they appeared in succession to the mind of John in the space of one day.

VISION FIRST, narrated in chap. iv. v. vi. which contains the general introduction to the prophecies of this book, the opening of the sealed book in general, and the opening of the six seals in particular.

VISION SECOND, narrated in chap. vii. which contains the sealing of the servants of God.

VISION THIRD, narrated in chap. viii. and ix. which contains the sounding of the six trumpets.

VISION FOURTH, narrated in chap. x. which contains the little opened book, and the general introduction to the prophecies, which respect the history of the world and of the church, from the year of Christ 756 to the end of the world.

VISION FIFTH, narrated in chap. xi. which contains the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth.

VISION SIXTH, narrated in chap. xii. which contains the woman in the wilderness, and the red dragon.

VISION SEVENTH, narrated in chap. xiii. which contains the beast with seven heads
and

and ten horns, with crowns upon his horns, and the name of blasphemy upon his heads.

VISION EIGHTH, narrated in chap. xiv. which contains the Lamb standing upon Mount Zion, and the introduction to the fall of Babylon.

VISION NINTH, narrated in chap. xv. and xvi. which contains the seven vials and seven last plagues.

VISION TENTH, narrated in chap. xvii. which contains the woman sitting upon the scarlet coloured beast.

VISION ELEVENTH, narrated in chap. xviii. which contains the fall of Babylon.

VISION TWELFTH, narrated in chap. xix. which contains the marriage of the Lamb.

VISION THIRTEENTH, narrated in chap. xx. which contains the reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth.

And VISION FOURTEENTH, narrated in chap. xxi. and xxii. which contains the new Jerusalem.

All these visions are marked, and their import explained in the commentary. A great part of this book contains prophecies which have been fulfilled before the present time. The true meaning of these may therefore be learned more minutely from the actual events as they are recorded in history. The vision of the six seals predicted events which have since actually happened, from the days of the apostle John to the year of Christ 325; and the seventh seal opens up the succeeding period. The vision of the six trumpets predicted events which have taken place from the year of Christ 325 to the year 1090; and the seventh trumpet opens up the following period. In point of time, chapters i. iv. v. x. and xv. which are introductory, comprehend general periods of time, as extensive as the particular chapters do to which they are introductory. Chapters ii. and iii. are historical of the actual state of the seven
Christian

Christian churches then in Asia, about the year of Christ 95. Chapters vi. viii. and ix. predicted events, the last of which took place before the year of Christ 1100. Chapter vii. predicts events which run from the year of Christ 325 to the year 2000. Chap. xi. the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth; chap. xii. the woman in the wilderness; chap. xiii. the beast with the seven heads and ten horns, with crowns on his horns, and the name of blasphemy on his heads; and chap. xvi. the seven vials, all predict contemporary events, which run parallel to one another from the year of Christ 756 to the year 1999: So that, in this year, 1790, 1034 years of the time are run, and only 209 years remain to complete all the events predicted in these four chapters. Chap. xiv. predicts events which shall happen in the end of the year of Christ 1999 and the beginning of the year 2000. Chap. xvii. is an explanation of the predictions contained in chap xiii. and therefore relates to the same period from 756 to 1999. Chap. xviii. predicts and describes an event which shall happen in the end of the year 1999,
Chap,

Chap. xix. predicts one which shall take place in the year 2000. And chapters xx. xxi. xxii. predict and describe events which shall happen from the year 2000 to the year 3000, with short, and in point of time indefinite, hints of the state or the world after the year 3000; of a final judgement, and of a future and eternal state.

All the periods of time are particularly explained and established upon fixed principles in the commentary. In explaining the text, I have taken neither the larger division of a chapter, nor the smaller one of a verse at once; but I have always been regulated by the nature of the passage itself. When the passage consisted of an hieroglyphic, it was always taken under view at once, whether it was larger or smaller. This certainly is the rule of nature; for to divide a complete figure is to mangle and misrepresent it. But where the passage is made up of detached symbols, or detached alphabetical descriptions, so as a single verse or a few verses could be understood by themselves, I have viewed such passages in one or a few verses together. Convinced that marginal
notes

notes and references break the thread of the subject, distract the attention of the reader, and occasion confusion and fatigue to him, I have thrown the quotations from histories into the body of the commentary. On this plan, to have quoted a great variety of historians on each event would have swelled the work too much: Therefore the reader is here referred to the following historians: Eusebius Pamphilus, Socrates Scolasticus, and Evagrius Scolasticus, their church histories; Lewis Ellies Dupin, doctor of the Sorbonne, his Church-history; and Edward Gibbon, his History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire. These historians agree with Mosheim's Church-history, in their account of facts and dates, as the inquisitive reader will see, by comparing him and them together, on the respective periods to which the events belong. Indeed Mr Gibbon acknowledges in express words his general agreement with Mosheim, and gives that historian the character for learning and candour which he justly deserves. In a note on chap. xv. at figure 103, he says, "In the history
" of the Christian hierarchy, I have, for the
" most

"most part followed the *learned and candid*
"Mosheim."

Indeed I might have saved the readers and myself this trouble: Because all the events predicted in this book are of such magnitude and importance, and so generally known, that all historians are agreed as to the natures and times of them. The following are the editions of the books which are most frequently quoted in the commentary:

Caroli Sigonii historia, de Occidentali imperio, Hanoviæ, typis Wecheliani, 1618, folio.

Mosheim's Church-history, translated into English by Maclaine, in 2 vols, quarto. London. 1765.—Of this historian I have made much use, not only on account of his high character, but also because, in his notes, he refers to all the early historians of character, who had written upon the same subjects with him.

Translation of Sleidan's history of the Reformation, by Edmund Bohun, folio, London 1689.

Translation of Mezeray's history of France, by John Bulteel, folio, London 1683.

Dr Robertſon's hiſtory of Charles V.
quarto, London 1769.

Spon and Wheeler, their voyages, vol 1ſt,
duodecimo, Amſterdam 1679.

Smith ſeptem Aſiæ eccleſiarum notitia,
octavo, Oxonii 1674.

In quoting from ſacred ſcripture, I have
always uſed numerals for chapters and fi-
gures for verſes ; thus, chap. xii. 6, 7. for
chap. 12th, verſes 6th, and 7th.

Perhaps ſome readers may think that this
work would have been better for the want of
the many practical obſervations, with which
the explanatory parts are interſperſed. But
I truſt that many others of them will think,
with me, that theſe ſtrictly accord to the
great deſign of the book of the Revelation,
which is, as repeatedly declared in it, to pro-
mote the faith and the patience of the ſaints,
to teſtify of Jeſus, and to bleſs men in read-
ing, hearing, and keeping the things which
are written in this book. I truſt it will ap-
pear, that theſe obſervations are fairly drawn
from the events which are predicted, and

that they evidently tend to promote, under the divine blessing, the best dispositions of the heart of man. However pure and high the pleasure is, which I should feel in being instrumental under God of increasing the knowledge of any of my fellow men, it is far inferior to that which I should ever feel in being the instrument of also exciting or promoting in them the graces and virtues, which Christianity teaches and inculcates, and which her divine founder exemplified in the highest perfection.

If a great variety of necessary duties had afforded me more time, the language might have been better polished: But I hope it is such as shall convey the sentiments to the reader without disgusting him; and, if that shall be the case, I trust my time hath been as well employed in many necessary duties, as it would have been in merely rounding a period.

The book of the Revelation being formed in a regular and connected chain, the subsequent parts can be understood only after a person hath obtained a competent knowledge

ledge of the preceeding parts. The commentary is constructed in the same way; and besides, each symbol is explained only the first time it occurs. It is therefore hoped that the reader will read the whole commentary over in regular order, before he form an opinion of it; that, after having seen the connection of the whole, and the light which one part reflects upon another, he may be qualified to form an impartial judgement.

Having no controversy with any commentator, and never thinking truth the less genuine or valuable that other persons have seen it before me, I have never rejected nor disguised any just interpretation of any of the predictions, with which I have met in any of the commentators; nor have I entered into controversy with those from whom I differ in opinion; but have simply stated what appears to me the right interpretation, hoping that the candid and enlightened reader, judging for himself, will prefer truth, from its innate evidence, to the mere authority of any man.

I have not dedicated this book to any person. If it does not contain the truths of God, and truths in which men are deeply interested, I do not wish that it should receive countenance and support from any man; and, if it does, though it may be opposed by those persons, whose mind is enmity against God, and who hate men and books for telling them the truth, I trust that Divine providence will, in the most seasonable time, raise up the most fit instruments to support and give it effect in the world. If any person shall write against this commentary; if his objections shall discover more of prejudice, of passion, or of party, than of knowledge, of judgment, and of virtue, they will soon confute themselves; and shall therefore receive no answer from me. If his objections, though well intended, are founded in mistake, it will be easy to answer them, by pointing out the mistake; and, if they are of such a nature as, for the good of the public, to deserve an answer, they shall receive such an one as they deserve. But if they shall be founded on any error in this commentary, which may
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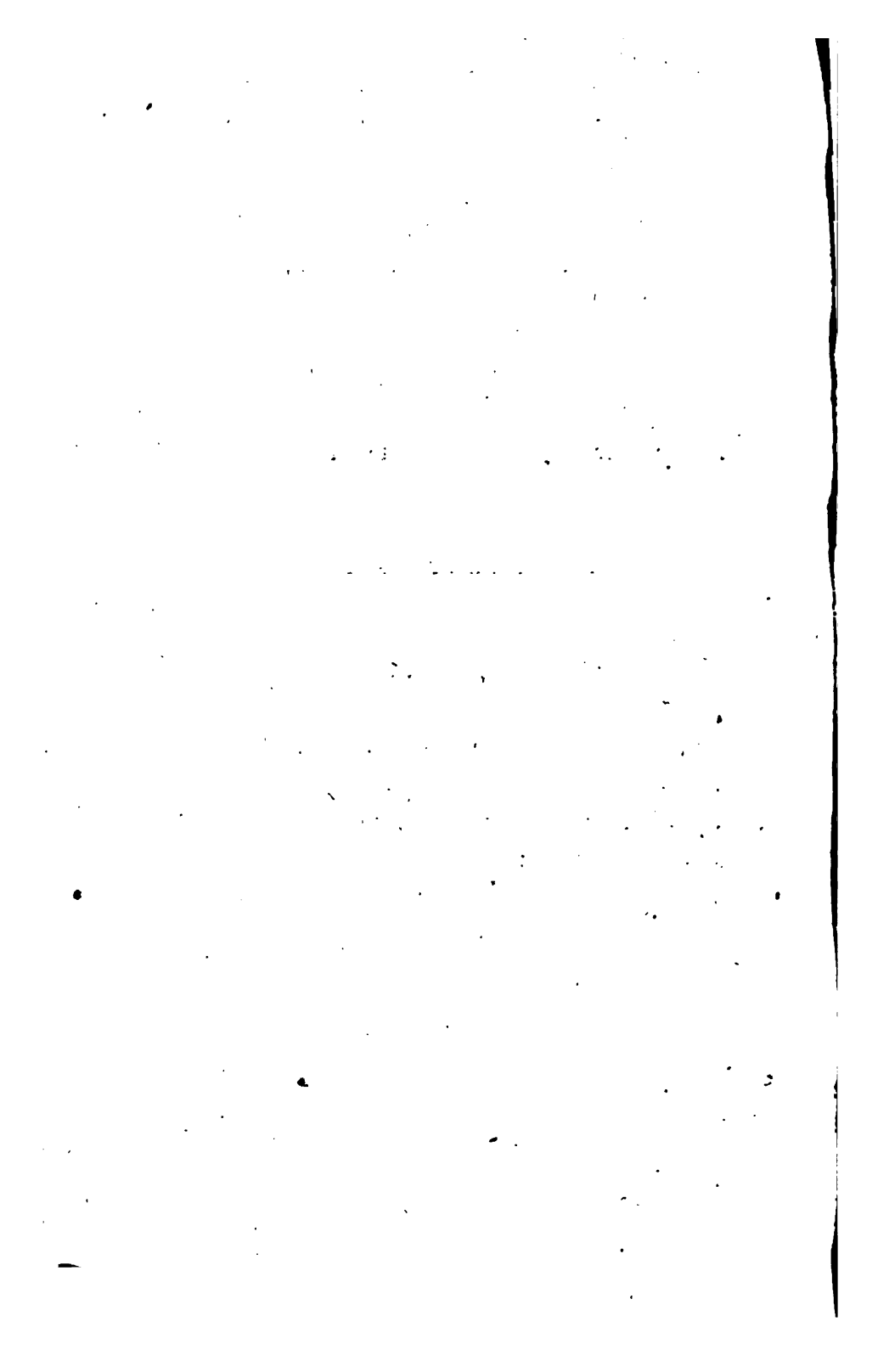
have escaped my notice, and if they shall unfold the latent truth, I shall be the first person who shall give him sincere and hearty thanks for discovering the error, and who shall embrace the truth which he hath brought to view. In quest of truth, I obtain the object of my pursuit whenever I clearly perceive truth. Let the person who brings it to view or his intentions be what they will, I trust I shall regard him as a friend who thus shall tell me the truth, though he should do it even in the tone of an enemy.

Perhaps even in this enlightened and liberal age, bigots to the church of Rome may be offended at the application of many of the predictions to the Papal hierarchy, and the more so that it is so striking. I assure them that it is no pleasure to me to say any thing that is bad of any person, or of any establishment, whether civil or religious; but, when writing upon the word of God, and for the public, I must say the truth, whoever shall be displeased with it. Perhaps some bigots of that church of which I have the happiness to be a member, or of some other

other Protestant churches or sects may be displeased, on the other hand, that I have written so favourably of the character and future expectations of well-meaning individuals of the church of Rome, as on ch. xiv. ver. 9, 10, 11. and in other passages.

I have in substance said, and I here say it again, that I know no external church in the world, in the present period, which is in every thing perfectly Christian; that the real church of Christ, at present on earth, consists of all those scattered individuals, in every land, and of every external denomination, who, as in chap. vii. are "God's sealed servants," whom "the Lord knows to be his," and who name the name of Christ, and "depart from evil." Unmoved by the censures of bigots of every church, I have said what the voice of scripture in general, of this book in particular, and of reason and experience uniformly says, that those individuals, of every external denomination, who are wise and good men, whom the Lord who cannot err knows to be his people, are the true worshippers of God, are sanctified by the spirit of God, and shall be finally saved
by

by the mercy of God through the mediation of Christ; and that no external church or profession can render foolish and wicked individuals, if they live and die of that character, true worshippers of God in this world, or finally holy and happy in a future state. Until the commencement of the millennium, in the year of Christ 2000, there will always be many persons, who, by disbelieving, despising, and opposing the prophecies of this book, shall fulfil them, "Let him that is filthy be filthy still;" and there will be many who shall be blessed in reading, hearing, studying, and obeying them. My sincere prayer to that God, who does all things in the best time and manner, is, that every error, whether my own or of other persons, may be discovered and rejected; and that the truth of God may be perceived, believed, loved, obeyed, and blessed.



A

C O M M E N T A R Y

ON THE

R E V E L A T I O N.

C H A P. I.—V E R. 1, 2.

THE Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it, by his angel, unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

In these words are contained, *1st*, The title of this book: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which
" God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants
" things which must shortly come to pass." *2^d*, The

VOL. I.

A

messenger

messenger by whom, and the person to whom, this revelation was first communicated. " And he sent " and signified it, by his angel, unto his servant John." And, 3d, The manner in which that person discharged the trust reposed in him. " Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of " Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw."

The title of this book plainly shews that it is a revelation from God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, the only Mediator between God and man: That it is a revelation of the prophetic kind: That, though some of the prophecies, as shall afterwards appear, comprehend events which shall happen to the time of the dissolution of this earth, yet the first events foretold in it were to happen very soon; and that, from these to the last events foretold in this book, there shall be a closely connected chain of predictions, and of correspondent events: And that the end of this prophecy is to communicate important discoveries to the servants of God; to those, in every age and country, " whom the Lord knoweth " to be his, and who name the name of Christ, and " depart from iniquity;" to those who are really religious, and make it as their meat and drink to do the will of God. While the servants of sin, the slaves of Satan, and the men of the world, shall treat this divine revelation with neglect or contempt, and shall reap no advantage from it, the servants of God, in every age, shall learn from it the important events

events which it foretells, in so far at least as, by that knowledge, to strengthen and support their faith and patience. Though this revelation was from God, yet, like every other blessing of the gospel, it was communicated through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Jesus did not himself reveal the whole of it to John; but he employed an angel to shew a great part of it to him. Why Jesus employed an angel to shew unto John, what he could easily have done himself? whether there is one particular angel, who is distinguished from all the other angels by the appellation of Christ's angel? or what particular angel this one was, who was employed to shew unto John the things which should shortly come to pass? are questions more calculated to gratify a vain, and perhaps a criminal curiosity, even a desire of "being wise above what is written," than to promote knowledge and virtue. But the plain and unequivocal meaning of the words now under our view is, that an angel was employed by Christ to shew to the author of this book the things which must come to pass. That in fact an angel was employed for this purpose, is evident from chap. xix. ver. 10, and chap. xxii. ver. 8, 9.

The author of this book styles himself John. That he was the Apostle John appears evident in the explanation of some of the following verses of this chapter. John tells us in what manner he executed the commission with which he was vested. "He bare record;" or,

as *ἐμαρτυροῦν*, the word in the original, signifies, he gave testimony as a witness does. He delivered no conjectures nor opinions of his own. He candidly and impartially narrated matters of fact, just as he had heard and seen them; particularly, he wrote those things which God revealed unto him,—“ the word “ of God ;” those things which Jesus testified unto him,—“ the testimony of Jesus ;” and the visions which appeared to his mind,—“ and the things “ which he saw.” Like a faithful witness, he not only testified *nothing* but what he heard and saw, but he testified also *all* that he heard and saw, relative to the things which must shortly come to pass.

VER. 3. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep these things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

On reading these words, one is ready to conclude that the apostle had foreseen, with what neglect and contempt this gospel prophecy should be treated, in almost every age and country, by too many even of those who are called Christians, and who dare not call in question its authenticity as a part of inspired scripture; and therefore he not only cautions them against that neglect and contempt, but produces the most direct and strong answers to the very objections which they make to the study of this book.

book. Though they acknowledge it to be a part of divine revelation, they say it is folly and presumption to read, hear, or study it; for it is unintelligible, and therefore can never profit them. But John says, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand." John calls this book a prophecy, that is, a prediction of future events through the inspiration of God. Every one, acquainted with the Old Testament dispensation, knows that there are many prophecies in the scriptures of the Old Testament; that they were expressed in dark and hieroglyphical language; that those of them, which predicted events which were to happen before this day, have been minutely fulfilled in the course of divine providence; and that, whenever the event took place, the minute and exact correspondence between the prediction and the event, was evident to every person who examined them with knowledge, candour, and diligence.

In the New Testament there are many short and detached predictions: Those of them, which referred to events which were to take place before the age in which we live, have been fully verified in the events; and those of them, which respect events yet to come, shall be accomplished in due time. But, as in the Old Testament, there was a chain of prophecy, by which the days of Isaiah, of Daniel,

I might go back to the earliest times; and say, the days of Moses, of Jacob, of Abraham, and even of Adam, were connected with the coming of Christ in human nature, and with the great events closely connected with that most important æra: So, in the New Testament, this book contains a closely connected chain of prophecy, relative to the various events which should happen to the church of Christ; or "kingdom of heaven," from the day in which John wrote it, until the dissolution of this earth.

The following qualities seem inseparable from prophecy; at least they are found in every prophecy which I have considered; and appear to me to be closely connected with the very nature of prophecy.

1st, That the prophecies are expressed in dark, but never in contradictory language.

2^d, That, before their accomplishment, the great outlines of the events may be discovered with certainty; but not all the minute circumstances.

3^d, That, the nearer the time of their accomplishment approaches, more of the predictions may be known; and that, after the events have happened, the most exact correspondence may be traced between every circumstance of the events and the predictions. And,

4th, That, neither before the event shall the general meaning of the prophecy, nor after the event shall the full meaning of it, appear to the generality

lity of mankind; but they shall appear to those persons only, who study it with competent knowledge, uprightness, and diligence. If prophecy were not possessed of these qualities, it would defeat its own end. By being clearly foreseen by those persons who should be the instruments of bringing them about, the events would be prevented. For instance, is it ever to be supposed that, if the individual Jews who crucified Jesus had clearly seen, from the antient prophecies, that he was the Messiah, and that his kingdom was not of this world, and yet that with wicked hands they were to crucify and slay him, that they would have done so? Without these qualities, prophecy could not be a proper trial of candour, diligence, faith, and patience. By these it bears a close analogy to the nature of moral and religious evidence, which enlightens and persuades the upright and the diligent, whilst it does not forcibly controul the prejudiced, the partial, and the indolent. By these it proves the foreknowledge and determination of God, in consistency with the liberty of moral agents.

From these observations, the force of the motives to read and hear this book, stated in this verse, may appear. We ought to read and study it with candour and diligence. And, as it must be publicly read and explained in Christian congregations, as a part of that scripture "which is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for re-
" proof,

“ proof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works;” Christians are required to hear it with sincerity and attention; for “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” We must not only read, study, and hear, but we must also keep the sayings of this book. By them we must regulate our conduct. By them we must prepare to meet, in a proper manner, the various events predicted in this book, as they shall occur to us in the course of divine providence.

“For the time is at hand.” Though this book contains a long connected chain of predictions of future events, some of which were at a great many hundred years distance from its date, yet the first events in that chain were to happen very soon, even in that year in which it was written. That they have done so shall appear as we proceed in this commentary. As such is the nature of this book, and as the men now living must soon meet with some of the events, which it predicts, they shall most certainly consult their own duty and happiness, by studying and practising the sayings which it contains.

From the nature of this book, as a closely connected chain of predictions, the motives in this verse, to read, hear, and obey, the things that are written therein, are equally strong in every age, as they were at the time the apostle wrote them; or rather they grow

grow stronger and stronger every day. As a prophecy it must be studied with candour, knowledge, and diligence, otherwise it cannot be understood. As a chain of prophecies, respecting a chain of events, which reaches from the Apostle's days to the end of this world; some of the events must be at hand in the present, and in every present age.

At this time, 1700 years from the date of the prophecy, many of the events predicted have taken place; so that, by them, much additional light is thrown upon this book. Before the present time, much more than the half of the prophecies contained in it have been accomplished; so that the greatest part of the book is now in the situation of a prophecy fulfilled; the meaning of which may, therefore, be fully and minutely discovered. By comparing the facts as recorded in authentic history, with the correspondent predictions in this book; we may clearly see the meaning of those already accomplished, obtain a convincing evidence of the inspiration of this book, and of scripture in general, be fully satisfied of the omniscience of God, and of his moral government in the world, obtain a just view of the nature of Christ's kingdom, and perceive much light reflected upon those parts of this prophecy, which are not yet accomplished.

Ver. 4, 5.—John to the seven churches

VOL. I.

B

which

which are in Asia: Grace be unto you, and peace from him who is, and who was, and who is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne: and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.

As the apostles addressed their epistles to some particular church or person, so John addresses this book to the seven churches which were then in Asia Minor. In the 11th verse of this chapter Jesus expressly commands John to write this book, and to send it to the seven Christian churches in Asia. It was, therefore, necessary that he should address it to them. Without such a command, it was very proper and natural for him to address this book to these churches; because a part of it consists of a particular epistle to each of these seven churches, contained in chapters second and third: and to whom is it so proper to address a letter as to the person, or collective body to whom it is written?

As John was in a state of banishment, this book might have been soon destroyed by his persecutors, had it remained in his own custody; and, at any rate, it would not have been of use to the servants of God, if it had not been communicated to them. It was therefore proper that he should address it

to

to some Christian church or churches; and to none was it more natural for him to have done so than to those in Asia Minor, for he had resided for a considerable time at Ephesus, and superintended the church there, which was one of them, and all the seven were at a small distance from the island of Patmos, where he wrote this book.

Like the other apostles, in their epistolary addresses, he prays for grace and peace to those churches. By grace we are to understand, the free favour of God to pardon their sins, and to renew and perfect their natures: and by peace, peace with God, peace of mind, and peace with man; the natural consequences of that grace. These blessings he prays for them from God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the only source from which we are taught by the gospel of Jesus, to hope for that grace and peace. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he describes by a kind of circumlocution; or rather, according to the idiom of prophetic writing, he gives them symbolical names, evidently expressive of the names which are given to them, in common or alphabetical language. As we proceed, we shall meet with symbolical names, uniformly in this book in place of literal ones, and for this obvious reason, that the book is written in the symbolical language, which is the language of prophecy. The nature of the symbolical language

shall be explained in our commentary on verses 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16, of this chapter.

God the Father is stiled, " him which is, and " which was, and which is to come : " A description exactly expressing that self-existence, independence, omnipresence, and eternity, which are signified by *Jehova*, the incommunicable name of God. The Holy Spirit is stiled " The seven spirits which are before his throne." In the symbolical language *Seven* signifies Holy and perfect. It signifies Holy in allusion to the seventh part of time having been consecrated as a holy Sabbath to the Lord. This was the case not only at the creation of the world, when " God blessed the seventh day " and sanctified it ; " but under the Mosaic dispensation, God said " Remember the sabbath-day to " keep it *holy*, six days shalt thou labour, and do " thy work : but the *seventh* day is the sabbath of " the Lord thy God " The seventh year was holy as the Sabbatical year, and seven times seven years were to be counted to mark out the holy year of Jubilee. The number seven too was very common in the sacrifices and purifications among the Jews, in order to ceremonial holiness. It shall afterwards be shewn, in its proper place ; that these Sevens, which run through the Old Testament scriptures, and through this book, have a reference to the seventh Chiliad, (or seventh thousand years) of the world ; which shall be the Millennium or great Sabbath

Sabbath of the whole earth. In allusion to the same things seven signifies perfection. On the *seventh* day God had perfectly finished the works of creation. Before atonements, consecrations, or lustrations could be perfected under the law of Moses, the guilty person, the person or thing to be consecrated, and the impure person, were to be sprinkled *seven* times. When an Hebrew forfeited his liberty, *seven* years perfected his slavery. He must have been set free at the Sabbatical year. When an Hebrew alienated his landed property, *seven* times *seven* years perfected the period of its alienation, and it returned to him or his heirs, clear of all incumbrances, at the year of Jubilee. *Seven* Chiliads too, shall perfect the ages of the World; in so far that, though the world shall continue for some time after the end of the seventh Chiliad, yet not so long, in all probability, as to make up another age, as shall afterwards be shewn in its proper place. Though the ages of the world are fixed in scripture, yet not the precise time of its dissolution. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven." Hence in the symbolical language the *seven* spirits, is of the same import with, The Holy and perfect Spirit: an appellation which in the full sense of the words can apply to that Spirit only who is God. Rev. xv. 4. It is said "Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou only art holy*." And
certainly

certainly absolute perfection is to be attributed to God only.

As in this verse John prays for grace and peace for the seven churches; and as the symbolical description of the holiness and perfection of the divine Spirit is taken from the legal purifications appointed for sinful men, and from the completion of the ages of the world; by the appellation of the *seven* spirits, it is intimated that the divine spirit perfectly purifies men from sin, by renewing them in the spirit of their mind. "That they are chosen to salvation through sanctification of the spirit :". That his gifts and operations are fully equal to all the ages and countries of the world, and particularly to the number and situations of all the seven churches in Asia, for whom John here prays for grace and peace.

"Before the throne," refers to the vision in verse 5th chap. iv. which shall be explained in its place. The Son of God, is styled, "Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." The whole of this name as applied to the Son of God is symbolical, even the well known and common appellation Jesus Christ. He is called Jesus, (which signifies a saviour) because he saves his people from their sins, and Christ (which signifies anointed) because he is the Lord's anointed, he is the Messiah. "The faithful witness." It is the peculiar

peculiar office of Christ faithfully to reveal the will of God to men. Mat. xi. 27. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Before Pilate Jesus saith, John xviii. 37. "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

As the revealer of the will of God, it seems to me that he was stiled, *The Word of God*, even before his incarnation. A word reveals or makes known to those who hear it the mind of the person whose word it is. Hence whatever makes known the mind of God is called the word of God. Thus sacred scripture is called the word of God; and, on this account it appears to me, that the Son of God is called the Word of God. John i. 1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This is the prophet whom Moses said the Lord would raise up from among the Jews like unto him.

"And the first begotten of the dead." The words in the original are *πρωτογονος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*, which should have been translated, "The first born of, or on account of, the dead." In the epistle to the Colossians chap. i. 18. Jesus is stiled the first born from the dead, which, in the original, is the very same with the words in this verse. To shew us that he who is thus called the first born of the dead

dead is true God, it is said verses 16, 17, of that chapter; "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

In the patriarchal age, the first born was the priest of his family; and under the Mosaic dispensation, the first born were virtually the priests; because God expressly declares, Numb. iii. 11, 12, 13. that he took the Levites for his priests instead of the *First Born*. By the dead we are to understand those who are spiritually dead: those who in the language of scripture "are dead in trespasses and sins. For to be carnally minded is death." Hence the first born of the dead, is the priest of those who were spiritually dead. Jesus is our great High Priest. But his priestly office was rendered necessary only by the sin and depravity of man. If men had not been guilty, there would have been no need for Christ as their priest, to take away their sin by the one sacrifice of himself. If men had been pure they could have approached immediately, in acts of devotion, to a pure God; and therefore would not have needed Christ to intercede with God for them, as their priest. The Apostle gives us a full account of the priestly office of Christ in the epistle to the Heb. chap. vii. 17,—28.

"And

" And the prince of the kings of the earth."

By the kings of the earth, we are to understand not only all the kings of the earth in general, but especially all the kings and emperors of the Roman empire, in its heathen, and in its papal state, with all the separate kingdoms into which it hath been divided in that last state. The prophet Daniel predicted the rise, the decline and downfall of the Roman empire, as the last of the four kingdoms which should bear rule over all the earth, in chap. ii. 31,—43. And then in the 44th verse, he foretold that the God of heaven should set up a kingdom, even Christ's kingdom, which should destroy all these kingdoms and continue for ever. " And in
 " the days of these kings shall the God of heaven
 " set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroy-
 " ed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other
 " people, but it shall break in peices, and consume
 " all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."

The same prediction is more fully explained in the seventh chapter of Daniel's prophecies. In the 13th and 14th verses of that chapter, he thus predicts and represents Christ by his well known name *The Son of Man*, as the prince of the kings of the earth: " I saw in the night visions, and be-
 " hold one like the *Son of Man* came with the
 " clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of
 " days, and they brought him near before him.
 " And there was given him dominion, and glory, and

“ a kingdom, that all people, nations, and lan-
 “ guages should serve him: his dominion is an e-
 “ verlasting dominion, which shall not pass away,
 “ and his kingdom that which shall not be destroy-
 “ ed.” In consequence of these predictions of Da-
 niel, in which he calls the Roman Empire the
 kingdom of the earth, and Christ’s kingdom the
 kingdom of heaven; it is, that, uniformly in this
 book, the Roman Empire, whether heathen or pa-
 pal, is called by the symbolical name of *The Earth*,
 and Christ’s kingdom by that of *Heaven*. Under
 these appellations they are very frequently men-
 tioned through the whole of the New Testament.
 But the reason of that application of these symboli-
 cal names shall be explained more fully in its proper
 place. The whole of the second psalm is a very
 plain prediction of Christ the Son of God, as the
 prince of the kings of the earth, which the reader
 is desired to consider with attention. In the second
 verse of that psalm he is called “ The Lord’s anoin-
 ted.” The word in the original is משיח (or his
 Messiah) which should have been translated, his
 Christ. But indeed, *anointed* in the English lan-
 guage is of the same signification with *Christ* in
 the Greek, and *Messiah* in the Hebrew languages.
 In the 6th verse he is styled a “ King upon Zion.”
 In the 7th he is called the Son of God; from the
 8th to the 12th verse, the extent of his dominion
 is mentioned, and the kings and the judges of the
 earth

earth are called upon to act a wise part in submitting to his iron scepter, and in doing obeisance to the Son. It is thus, that, in the symbolical language, Christ's kingly office is described. By the superintendency of his providence he over-rules, controuls, and governs the kingdoms of this world, and particularly the Roman empire both in its heathen and papal state, in such a manner that, without their intending it, they shall bring about the full establishment and triumph of his kingdom in this world, and accomplish the purposes predicted in this book. One kingdom shall be dissolved and another shall rise out of its ruins; not by chance, but by the appointment of the Prince of the kings of the earth. And at the appointed time the Roman empire, in its last form of government, shall be totally destroyed; and then all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. But this will fall more properly to be explained in chap. xix. 11,—21, to which passage the reader is now referred.

Last clause of verse 5th and 6th.—Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us Kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

This song of praise John offers up in name of the whole church of Christ. It contains not only praises for blessings already received; but predictions of praises, which shall be offered up by generations yet unborn, for blessings which are yet to come. In it he praises Christ for loving his church. The tongue of man cannot express, nor the heart of man conceive love more pure, warm and permanent, than that, which, for us men and for our salvation, when we were strangers, aliens, and enemies to God by wicked works, brought the Son of God from heaven to earth; made the Word become flesh and dwell among us; take upon him the form of a servant; become a man of sorrows; and acquainted with grief; and at last die upon the cross, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God; Rom. v. 6,—8. He praises him for washing us from our sins in his own blood. "He is the propitiation for our sins." "He took away sin by the one sacrifice of himself." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin!" 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Heb. ix. 11,—28. And lastly, he praises him for making us kings and priests unto God, even his Father. In one respect true Christians are made kings in every age of the church, as they are rescued from the slavery of sin and Satan, and vindicated to the liberty of sons of God. In one respect they are made priests to God in every age, because under the gospel, they are allowed

lowed near access to God in acts of devotion. The Christian, needs not, like the Jew of old, a priest to offer up sacrifices to God for him. He approaches unto God through the mediation of Christ alone. John iv. 23, 24. "But the hour cometh, and now " is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit, and in truth." Psalm li. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." The Christian as a priest unto God, can not only offer up unto God prayers and praises for himself, but also intercessions and thanksgivings for others. In these senses the apostle Peter styled Christians in his day. (1 Pet. ii. 9.) "A chosen generation, a royal priesthood; that they might shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness, into his marvelous light." But this ground of praise is prophetic, and respects a period of time as yet at about two hundred years distance from us, in which the church of Christ shall be raised to so triumphant and pure a state in this world, that, in a much more exalted sense of the words, Christians shall be made kings and priests unto God. This triumphant and pure state of the church is foretold in Daniel vii. 25,—27. And in this book, v. 10. and xx. 4,—6, on which last passage

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sage this prediction will fall most properly to be explained.

By ascribing glory and dominion to Christ forever and ever, John foretells that all these gracious interpositions of Christ, however despised, and contemned by many, shall illustriously display the glory of all perfections in him; and that his kingdom, however opposed by "principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this age and spiritual wickedness in heavenly places," shall not be overthrown, nor its triumph over all opposition retarded a single day beyond the time foretold by the prophets of God. The Assyrian, Persian, Grecian, and the heathen Roman empire have all been dissolved. The modern kingdoms of the earth, shall have their rise, decline and downfall, like these antient ones; but Christ's kingdom shall never be overthrown. In a period yet to come, it shall flourish much more in this world than it hath hitherto done. And, when not only the kingdoms of this world, but this world itself shall be dissolved, his kingdom of truth, righteousness, peace, and joy shall flourish forever in heaven. "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

"Amen," So be it, or So let it be. By this word, with which John closes his song of praise, and with which, we ordinarily close our prayers and thank-givings

givings unto God, he expresses his confident hope, and ardent desire, that the love of Christ, in the redemption of mankind by his blood, shall illustrate the glory of his perfections; and that his kingdom of truth, righteousness, peace and joy shall never be overthrown by men or devils.

Ver. 7.—Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so. Amen.

This verse is a citation from three predictions of the coming of Christ recorded in Daniel vii. 13. Zechariah xii. 10. and Mat. xxiv. 30. The first of these is an early prophecy of the prosperity of Christ's kingdom in this world, after the final overthrow of the last head of Roman government. This is evident from the whole 7th chap. of Daniel, which will fall to be explained more fully as we proceed in this book. The second is a prediction of the conversion of the Jews, who are here designed *they that pierced him*. And the last is a prophecy of the final overthrow of the Roman empire, when Christ's kingdom shall come in all that glory and triumph which shall make the period foretold in Rev. xx. 4,—6. Hence the meaning of this verse is, that these early and dark hints delivered by Daniel, Zechariah, and Matthew, concerning

cerning the prosperity of Christ's kingdom in this world, in a distant period, the conversion of the Jews, and the total overthrow of papal Rome, shall be more fully and clearly unfolded in this book. That they are so will I hope, appear as we proceed. To these things John says Amen, in token of his firm belief that they shall be so, his ardent desire that they may happen, and his full conviction of their fitness and propriety.

Ver. 8.—I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

This book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ. In this verse Christ himself speaks, and tell us who he is. He is "the Lord;" in consequence of that essential sovereignty over all; which is essential to Christ as true God, that dominion with which he is vested as mediator during the subsistence of the mediatorial kingdom, and until he shall deliver up that kingdom unto God the Father, and that supreme power by which he controuls, over-rules and shall at last subdue all his enemies, and the opposers of his kingdom. He is styled "The Lord" in a great multitude of passages of scripture: But the 34th, 35th, and 36th verses of the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles in so striking a manner apply

apply the appellation of Lord to Christ, that I shall insert them; "For David is not ascended into the heavens; but he saith himself, the Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, until I makes thy foes thy footstool." Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both *Lord and Christ*." This Lord, who is Jesus Christ, saith, "I am Alpha and Omega." These two words are the names of the first, and the last letters of the Greek alphabet; and indeed the two letters themselves (Α Ω) are in the original, and not the names of them. The Greeks represent numbers, not by the digits or figures used by us, and many other nations, but by the letters of their alphabet. Hence alpha and omega, which are the first and the last of their numbers, signify in the symbolical language, the first and the last. Thus Christ, as God, is the first and the last of beings. He was before all other beings. Of every other he could have said, as he said to the Jews of Abraham, John viii. 58. "Verily verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am." He is the last. None shall survive him. He is self-existent and eternal.

"He is the beginning." He created all. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were
Ver. 1. D. "were

" were made by him : and without him was not
 " any thing made that was made."

He is " the ending." He will at last judge all
 and fix their final doom. John v. 22, 23. " For
 " the Father judgeth no man ; but hath commit-
 " ted all judgement unto the Son : that men should
 " honour the Son, even as they honour the Fa-
 " ther."

" Who is, who was, and who is to come," the
 symbolical name of *Jehova* the incommunicable
 name of God ; which is applied, verse 4th, to God
 the Father, and in this verse to Jesus Christ, to
 shew that he is true God, since he exists in all time
 past, present and future. He is also called *the Al-*
mighty. Though some creatures may be stiled
 mighty, yet not even the first and greatest of crea-
 tures can be stiled Almighty. Omnipotence, like
 self-existence and eternity, is an incommunicable
 attribute of Deity. The account given of Christ
 in this verse so fully shews him to be true God,
 that it is not possible to express Deity in more un-
 equivocal terms, than " the first and the last, the
 " beginning and the ending, which is, which was,
 " and which is to come, the Almighty."

But perhaps, those who will not acknowledge
 the true divinity of Christ, will endeavour to evade
 the force of this description, by saying, that it ap-
 plies to God only and not to Jesus Christ. Let
 them read with attention verses 11th,—18th of this
 chapter,

chapter, especially the 17th, and 18th; and they will find, that the same person who saith, " I am " Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the Almighty," saith also; " I am he that liveth, and " *was dead*; and behold I am alive for evermore."

But this last part of the description cannot apply to God the Father, but must apply only to the " Word, which is God, and which was made flesh, " and dwelt among men."

As such is the character of Jesus, he could clearly foresee, perfectly foretell, and, in spite of all opposition, bring about, every event. What event could escape the notice of him who is " the first " and the last, the beginning and the ending, which " is, and which was, and which is to come?" Or what power or policy could prevent the full accomplishment of the predictions of him who is the Lord, and the Almighty?

Ver. 9.—I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom, and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

John informs the seven churches in Asia of his situation, and of the occasion of it, at the time he saw and wrote the heavenly visions contained in

this book. He was in the island of Patmos, a small, barren, and thinly peopled island (of about thirty miles in circumference), in the Ægean sea, or as it is now called the Archipelago. It is situated about forty miles from the continent of Asia towards Ephesus, and therefore at a small distance from the seven Asiatic churches. Its modern name is Palmosa. Thither the Apostle John was banished by the Roman emperor Domitian, about the year of Christ 95.

At that time Domitian carried on a persecution against the Christians, and banished John to this island for his attachment to the truths of inspired scriptures, as the word or revelation of the will of God to man; and for that open testimony which he gave that Jesus is the Christ, and the Son of God.

In this persecuted state he styles himself, a brother and companion to the Christians in Asia, in the three following particulars, in which that moral or spiritual relation between him and them was founded: *1st*, In "the tribulation of Jesus Christ;" those persecutions to which he and they were both exposed, from the hands of Domitian, for their faith in Christ, and open attachment to his religion. *2dly*, "In the kingdom of Jesus Christ." In the belief, obedience and enjoyment of that truth, righteousness, peace, and joy, which constitute the kingdom of Christ.

And,

And, *3dly*, "In the patience of Jesus Christ." In that patience, serenity and firmness of mind when suffering for the truth, which Christ taught, and exemplified in his own unparailelled sufferings; and which those only possess, in whose hearts the kingdom of Christ is erected.

Ver. 10, 11.—I was in the spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: And what thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

John says "*He was in the spirit.*" This is the scripture expression for being under the power of divine inspiration. In every passage of scripture where this expression occurs, it always signifies that the person, to whom it is applied, was inspired at the time. Thus Mat. xxii. 43. "Jesus saith unto them, How then doth David *in spirit* call him 'Lord?'" By looking into the context, the reader will clearly see that the meaning of that expression is, How then doth David, speaking by *inspiration*,
call

call him Lord? Rev. iv. 2. "And immediately I
"was in the *spirit*."—xvii. 3. "So he carried me
"away in the *spirit* into the wilderness;"—and
xxi. 10. "And he carried me away in *the spirit*,
"to a great and high mountain." In all these
passages, the context fully shews that, by this ex-
pression, John declared that he was inspired at
these times. This phrase is exceedingly expres-
sive of the nature of inspiration, the thing signifi-
ed by it. When a person perceives and feels
through the channels of the bodily organs, as we
all ordinarily do, he is said to be *in the body*. But
when perceptions are conveyed to, and impres-
sions are made upon, his mind by the spirit of
God immediately, and without the intervention
of his bodily organs, as are done in inspiration,
he is with equal propriety said to be *in the spirit*,
because the impression is made upon him in a way
similar to that, or probably in the precise same
way, in which one unembodied spirit communi-
cates its ideas to another, in the separated state of
man's existence after the death of his body, and
before the resurrection of the dead. Agreeably
to this account of the matter, the inspired Paul
giving us an account of a vision which he saw,
and at the same time being at a loss to say, whe-
ther it was communicated to him through the
channel of his bodily organs, or by immediate in-
spiration, says, 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. "I knew a man in
"Christ,

"Christ, above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body I cannot tell: God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth.)" &c.

It was on the Lord's day that John was inspired at this time. The first day of the week was so called in memory of Christ's resurrection from the dead on that day; and is sacred to the worship of God by the disciples of the Lord.

To enumerate the various kinds and degrees of divine inspiration, as they are stated by those writers who treat directly of that subject, would be an unnecessary digression. Let it be observed in general only, that it is unnecessary to attempt a proof of the reality or nature of divine inspiration, to real Christians, because their faith, founded upon sacred scripture, necessarily pre-supposes the belief of it.

But, if any should look into this book, who deny divine inspiration; for their sakes, let it be observed: That that God, who endowed one man with the power of making known his ideas to another man, in such a way as to convince him fully who it is that speaks to him; certainly must have a power himself of making his mind known to the men, whom he hath made, and in such a manner as to leave them under no doubt, that the communications come from him. "Understand, ye brutish

"brutish among the people: and ye fools when will
 "ye be wise? He that planted the ear shall he not
 "hear? He that formed the eye shall he not see?
 "He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not he cor-
 "rect? He that teacheth man knowledge, shall
 "not he know?" What are called natural intel-
 lectual powers are as much the gift of God, as in-
 spired communications are. It is God who makes
 man wiser than the fowls of heaven, and giveth
 him more understanding than the beasts of the
 earth. It is God, who maketh one man to differ
 from another in kind and degree of natural genius.
 Let not any, then, who must admit that they are
 indebted to God for their intellectual powers;
 through a false, criminal, and dangerous pride of
 understanding, be ashamed to acknowledge him
 for the blessings of divine revelation. Let them
 read this book with candour and attention, and
 the historical detail of facts, in which the predic-
 tions of John have been accomplished in a most
 minute and striking manner, and in its effects; I
 trust, and pray to God, they shall then see an in-
 contestible proof of divine inspiration.

In whatever manner God communicates his
 will by inspiration to any man, at any time, we
 may be certain that that person distinctly perceives
 what is communicated, and from whom it comes.
 Inspiration was communicated to the mind some-
 times, by impressions made upon it similar to those,
 which,

which, in the ordinary way are made upon it, through the ear by sounds; and at other times by impressions similar to those, which, in an ordinary way, are made upon it, through the eye, by the objects of sight. In both these ways, it was frequently communicated to the prophets of God, both in the Old and New Testament, and particularly to John in this book.

We are not to imagine that, in the first of these kinds, an audible voice is actually heard by the bodily ear; or, in the second, that a visible object is actually seen by the bodily eye: but only, that in the first, an impression is made on the mind, and ideas are communicated to it directly, without the intervention of an audible sound striking on the bodily organ; very similar to these impressions which are made upon it in ordinary cases through the ear: and in the second, like those which are made upon it through the eye; but without being conveyed to it through that organ. Of these immediate impressions on the mind, persons accustomed to dreaming, may form some idea, when they recollect with what distinctness and force of impression, they have heard words, and seen persons, or other visible objects with their minds, when their ears and eyes were not only closed with sleep, but in fact no audible words were spoken in their ears, and no such person or visible object was before their eyes.

The first impressiion, which, at this time, was made upon the mind of John by inspiration, was just such an one, as, in an ordinary way, would have been made upon it by a great voice behind him, loud as the sound of a trumpet. This voice was not only loud, but also articulate and distinct. By it John was informed that the impressiion was made upon his mind by Jesus Christ, stiled Alpha and Omega, and that the revelation should be made to him in the way of vision. The different revelations made to him, as recorded in this book, were communicated to his mind by visions. All these different visions shall be distinctly marked as we proceed.

Inspiration in the way of vision, like the evidence of sight, is the clearest kind of impressiion which can be made upon the mind of man.

Jesus commands John to write these visions in a book, and to send it to the seven Christian churches in Asia, particularly mentioned in this verse. The respective situations and characters of these seven cities, and of the Christian churches in them, will fall more properly to be considered when the particular epistles, addressed to each of them, come under our review.

Verse 12th, 1st clause.—And I turned to see the voice that spake with me.

Though

Though John was commanded to write the visions in a book, he had, as yet, seen none of them; but had only heard a loud and distinct voice, behind him, giving that command. Following the sound, he turned about to see what it was that spake to him.

It is said, he turned to "see the voice." Even the best writers sometimes use a word, expressive of the perception of one sense, to signify that of another sense. To see a sound, or a voice, is a phrase used in Exodus xx. 18. and in Eschylus, Prom. v. 21. The phrase is not unnatural in this passage; but, on the contrary, very expressive of what must have been the state of John's mind when he spake these words. He had just heard, behind him, an awful, loud, articulate, and distinct sound; but had seen no person. He therefore, instantaneously and instinctively, turned about to see; but he did not know whether any person or visible object was to be seen. He turned, therefore, to see if he could obtain any more distinct perception of the voice and of the speaker. It was the voice which, at that time, had seized upon and captivated his mind: It was therefore very natural for him to say, that he turned to see the voice.

INTRODUCTORY VISION.

Verse 12th, 2d clause, and verses 13, 14, 15, 16.—And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; and in the midst of the seven candlesticks, one, like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.

These four verses contain the *Introductory Vision* which was made to John.

Before explaining this one, it is necessary, and will be of the greatest use, for understanding this book aright, that I explain the nature of the symbolical language, in which it is written. One great reason why this book is so little understood, is, that men are either ignorant of, or inattentive to, the symbolical or hieroglyphical language.

language. To discover the meaning of any book, it is absolutely necessary that we understand the language in which it is written.—Let the meaning of a book be as plain as possible, if it is written in the Hebrew, Greek, or Latin languages, it will be perfectly unintelligible to every person who can read the English language only. In like manner, if a book is written in the symbolical language, which is the case with all the prophetic parts of this book, it must be equally unintelligible to those persons, who, though acquainted with all the languages which are written in the alphabetical characters, are entire strangers to the symbolical language.

In the first ages of the world, no characters were invented to express the simple sounds of which words are compounded. These arbitrary signs, which express the different sounds, of which all the words in our language are formed, and in every other language in which alphabetical letters are used, are of later invention. In the earliest and most simple times, the characters, which men first used in writing, were the most natural and simple; even the exact pictures of those visible objects, which were the subjects of their few and simple writings. Thus, for instance,—to express a bird, they drew the picture of a bird; to express a horse,—the picture of horse; and, to express a man,—the picture of a man. But this
stage

stage of writing, like the first stage of every other art, was not only simple, but also very rude and limited. This painting and engraving could express material and visible objects only, but was quite unfit for expressing spiritual objects or abstract ideas.

—In the next stage of writing, the figures or pictures of visible objects were continued : But, then they were used to express not these things themselves, of which they were the pictures ; but other things of an invisible nature, and even abstract ideas, between which, and the things of which these characters were the pictures, there was some kind of resemblance. Thus, for instance, the picture of the face of man signified wisdom ; because man is the wisest of all visible creatures which we have seen : The picture of a lion signified boldness and courage ; because a lion is the most courageous of animals : And a circle signified eternity ; because it hath neither beginning nor end. This mode of writing was called the symbolical ; and, because it was continued among heathen priests, long after the invention of alphabetical characters, in order to conceal the mysteries of their religion from the people, it was also called the hieroglyphical manner of writing ; that is, the sacred engraving or painting. That the symbolical was the mode of writing, before the invention of letters, every one acquainted with the history of writing must know. If any doubt of this, let them consult Diodo-

rus Siculus, *lib.* iii. Servius, in *Virgil. Æn. lib.* v. 85. Lucan, *Pharf. lib.* iii. Tacitus, *Annal. lib.* xi. c. 14. Amm. Marc. *lib.* xvii.

The inhabitants of America knew nothing of letters until the Europeans discovered that continent. They had only hieroglyphical characters, and they still retain the use of them. The Chinese still use the symbolical characters.

The prophetic parts, or visions, of this book, are written in the symbolical language. I have not said symbolical characters, but symbolical language; because, though the *characters* in which this book was originally written, were the *letters* of the Greek alphabet, and those in which our translation is written are the letters of the Roman alphabet; yet the *language* itself, though expressed in these characters, is the symbolical.—To make my meaning more clear, let it be observed, that if a copy of the Old Testament were all written in Hebrew words, but all these words written in English or Roman characters; and a copy of the New Testament were all written in Greek words, but all these words written in English or Roman letters; though it could not be said of such a copy of the Old Testament, that it was written in Hebrew characters; or of such a copy of the New Testament, that it was written in Greek letters; yet, with the utmost propriety, it could be said, that the former was written in the Hebrew

brew language, and the latter in the Greek : And though a person, who could read the English language only, might read and pronounce the words of both ; yet, because he does not understand the Hebrew language, he could not understand the meaning of the former, and, because he is ignorant of the Greek language, he could not discover the contents of the latter.—Exactly similar is the case with the prophetic parts of this book ; because written originally in Greek letters, and translated into English letters, they may be read and pronounced by those who can read these letters ; but, because written in the symbolical language, they can be understood by those persons only who are acquainted with that language.

This seems, to me, to be the ordinary language of prophecy. In particular, it runs through the prophecies of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. Many good reasons might be assigned for the propriety of this language, of this kind of universal and natural language, in prophecies intended for many ages, and all nations of the world, as many of those of Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and John are. To state these it is unnecessary. Since, in fact, God hath made choice of this language for this book and other prophecies, we may be certain that he who cannot err did so for the best reasons.—The nature of this language will more clearly appear as I proceed in the explication of this book ; when every

very different symbol shall be explained as it occurs.

Each symbol has as determinate and distinct a meaning, as each word in other languages hath. Every time the same symbol occurs in this book, and in all the prophetic writings, it preserves its proper and determinate sense, as much as the same word in other languages preserves its proper meaning, whenever it occurs.

Besides the common symbols, which, in this and all other symbolical writings, are used in their common acceptation, some symbols in this book are taken from the visible representations under the Mosaic dispensation. As that dispensation was typical of the Christian, and as the observances under the law were the shadows of better and more spiritual things to come under the gospel; such peculiar symbols were exceedingly proper in a book of prophecies, written under the Christian dispensation. It is also to be observed, that the prophets, Ezekiel, Daniel, and also John in this book, give literal and plain explications of the most mysterious of the symbols which they use; which explications are the proper keys to their prophecies. We shall meet with several of these keys in this book, so plain, when duly considered, and so well fitted for opening up the true meaning of this book, that we shall be apt to be astonished

at our own inattention, in not having clearly perceived them long ago.

Having said so much with respect to the symbolical language in which this book is written, let us proceed to consider this *Introductory Vision*. In it we have an instance of this language. We are not to suppose that John saw, with his bodily eyes, the things described in these verses. The exact same impressions were made upon his mind by the Spirit of God, without the use of his bodily eyes, that would have been made upon it, if he had actually seen, with his bodily eyes, the things described in these verses. To spend any time, to explain, in this place, the meaning of this vision, would be unnecessary, because it is particularly explained in the 17th, 18th, and 20th verses of this chapter, as shall appear in that place.

Verse 17th, 18th.—And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me; Fear not, I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

This vision struck John with awe. It had the same effect upon his mind, as if he had in fact seen

seen, with his bodily eyes, such a majestic and glorious person. He fainted for fear, and fell down at his feet. This glorious person laid his right hand upon him, thus recovered him from his fainting, and said unto him; *Fear not*. He then tells him who he is:—"The first and the last." A name which Jesus had taken in verse 11th;—a name which can suit no being but that God, who is self-existent and eternal, who was before all other beings, and who shall live for ever. And he adds, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; " and behold I am alive for evermore." Whilst this part of the description corresponds with the former, in shewing that he is more than mortal; that he is divine, because he hath life in himself, and liveth for evermore; it shews, at the same time, that, in this person, there is also a nature that had been mortal, and is different from the divine nature; for *he was dead*.

"He hath the keys of hell and of death;" that is of the invisible state. He it is only, who rescues from hell those who shall be finally delivered from destruction. He it is, who for himself opened the gates of death, burst open the sealed tomb, unlocked the grave for mortal man, and who, by his own power, shall raise the dead at the general resurrection: "For as in Adam all die, so " so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is highly probable, that Christ is here said to

have the keys of hell and of death, in reference to what is frequently said, in this book, about death, and the keys of hell. In chap. ix. 1, 2.—“And I saw a star fall from heaven to earth; and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit; and he opened the bottomless pit.” Chap. xx. 1, 2.—“And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years.” In the former of these passages, the many dangerous errors which the Bishop of Rome, after his decline from the purity of Christianity, was to be instrumental in bringing from hell to earth, are predicted; and, in the second, the restraint which shall be laid upon the devil for the thousand years of the millenium state, when he shall be confined to hell, and hindered from tempting men upon earth, is predicted, as shall be fully shewn in their places. When it is said, that Christ hath the keys of hell, the Christian is taught that neither the errors of Popery, nor the temptations of the devil shall totally banish true religion and virtue from the world. The angel of the bottomless pit cannot open a door in hell, through which a single doctrine of devils can be conveyed to this world, until Christ, who has the great key of hell, shall permit him to open it. And
the

the devil himself can go no longer about like a roaring lion on this earth, seeking whom he may devour, than Christ, who has the key of hell is pleased for wise, but to us mysterious, purposes, to permit him. When Christ sends his angel with the key of hell, Satan must be locked up in it as a prison ; and must deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years be fulfilled.

In this book, it is frequently predicted, that Christians shall be killed by their persecutors; and frequent mention is made both of the first and second death. It is promised to the Christian, who overcomes temptations, that he shall not be hurt of the second death. When, therefore, it is said, that Christ hath the key of death, the Christian is assured that none of his persecutors can hurt or kill him, till Christ is pleased to permit them ; and that, if it is the will of him who hath the key of the second as well as of the first death, that he shall lose his animal life for Christ in this world, he shall save his spiritual life in the future and eternal world.

There is only one person in the whole universe, to whom all the parts of this description, apparently so inconsistent with one another, exactly agree, even Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man. This is he of whom inspired scripture says, John i. 1.—3. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word

“ Word was God. All things were made by him,
 “ and without him was not any thing made that
 “ was made.” Heb. the whole of chap. i. Philip.
 ii. 6.—11. John i. 14.—“ And the Word was
 “ made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld
 “ his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of
 “ the Father, full of grace and truth.” 1 Pet.
 iii. 18.—“ For Christ also hath once suffered for
 “ sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might
 “ bring us to God,) being put to death in the
 “ flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” Rom. v. 8.
 —“ But God commendeth his love towards us,
 “ in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died
 “ for us.” Rom. vi. 9.—“ Knowing that Christ
 “ being raised from the dead, dieth no more;
 “ death hath no more dominion over him.”
 Heb. ix. 24.—28. 1 Cor. xv. 3.—8. 20.—26.
 and 55. 57.—“ O death, where is thy sting? O
 “ grave, where is thy victory? the sting of death
 “ is sin; and the strength of sin is the law; but
 “ thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory
 “ through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Heb. ii. 14.
 16. The reader is desired to consult the passages of scripture, which are here referred to, but not transcribed. From all these passages, and many others, which might have been adduced, it is as evident as language can make it, that the person marked by the particular features of the character contained in the two verses now under our view,

is Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the world, in whom the divine and the human nature are united.

Verse 19th, and 1st clause of verse 20th.—

Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter, the mystery of the seven stars, which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.

These words contain the commission which Jesus gave to John, and the great division of this book. He was commanded to *write* those things, as this revelation was made to him, not for his private information only, nor for that of his contemporaries merely; but also for mankind at large, and for succeeding ages. He wrote these things, not of his own accord, nor by the advice and command of any mere man; but by the express command of Christ.

First, He was to write "the things which he had seen;" or, more agreeably to the true meaning of the Greek word, *αἰδεσας*, he was to write the vision which he had seen already; and these visions, also, which he was soon to see, even all the other visions contained in this book. As these visions were made to John in succession, one after another, time, which related to them all, behoved

to

to be indefinite ; and hence, according to the construction of the Greek verbs, εἶδεν is in the aorist. The various visions which were made to John, he was to write exactly as they appeared to his mind. Whether he understood the real meaning of the visions, or not, he was not to make the smallest alteration, in his written account of them, from that appearance, which, at the time of the visions, they had to his mind. In obedience to this command, he wrote down these visions just as they stand in this book of the Revelation ; which visions, as we proceed, shall appear to make up the greatest part of it.

The following part of verse 19th runs thus in the original ; *και α ειναι, και α μελλει γενεσθαι μετα ταυτα*, and should have been thus translated, (as every one acquainted with the Greek language must know) : “ Even the things which at present exist, “ and the things which shall come into existence “ after these ;” that is, the visions relate to the present state of the Christian church, and of the world as connected with it, and also to those events relative to both, which have not taken place yet, but which, in the course of divine providence, shall rise into existence, in regular succession, from the present moment to the dissolution of this earth.

Accordingly, some of the visions represent the things which existed in the days of John, about
the

the year of Christ, ninety five, when this vision was made to him. Such, for instance, as the first vision recorded in this chapter, verses 12,—16. which related to the then present state of the seven Christian churches in Asia. The state of these churches, at that time, is delineated in the seven epistles addressed to them, and contained in chap. ii. and iii. The first seal also relates to *the things which are*; and all the other visions predict the various events, which, in regular succession, were to happen to the church of Christ, and the kingdoms of the world, as connected with it, to the end of this world.

Such was the command given to John; and such is the great division of this book. As we proceed, I trust, it shall appear, that he hath faithfully executed this command; and that this book exactly corresponds to this division. He is commanded, in particular, at this time, to write the mystery of the seven stars, which he saw in Christ's right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.

Verse 20th, 2d clause.—The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks, which thou sawest, are the seven churches.

In this verse, Jesus explains the mystery, or hieroglyphical meaning, of the seven stars, which John saw in his right hand, and of the seven candlesticks. He plainly tells him, that the seven stars are the angels of the seven Christian churches in Asia, particularly enumerated in the 11th verse; and that the seven candlesticks are the seven churches. The angels are the ministers of these churches. ἄγγελοι, the word translated angels, signifies messengers, those who carry a message from one person to another. It is commonly used to signify that order of heavenly spirits, who are employed as the messengers of God; who, not from any thing peculiar in their nature, but from the nature of their office, are stiled angels. Hence any person, or even event or thing, that is employed as an instrument to carry the messages of God to men, is called an angel; as shall appear in the course of this book. The peculiar and official work of a minister of the gospel, is to deliver to the church the messages of God. He is to preach to them, not the commandments of men, as doctrines, but only the doctrines of the gospel of Christ, as they are taught by God, in those scriptures, which
“ are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction,
“ and for instruction in righteousness, that the
“ man of God, (or messenger of God), may be
“ perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good
“ works.”

“ works.” The gospel signifies *good tidings*, as it was originally denominated by the angel who proclaimed the birth of Christ, and the introduction of the gospel into the world, Luke ii. 10.

The connection between the import of the word, angel, and the work of a minister of the gospel, is very close, and must be very striking to those who are acquainted with the Greek language, the language in which the New Testament was written. In the 2d chapter and 10th verse of Luke’s gospel history, when the angel said, as in our translation, “ I bring you good tidings,” it is in the original, ἄγγελος εὐαγγελίζομαι, which, translated literally, is, “ And the angel said, I act the part of “ a good angel, or messenger.”

That the angels of the churches are the ministers of these churches, is further evident from the symbol by which they are represented, even a star. In the symbolical language, a star always signifies a minister of religion. We shall frequently meet with this symbol, in this book, and in every place find that it is of the same signification.

In the symbolical language, seven candlesticks signify seven churches. We cannot err in explaining the meaning of the hieroglyphics used in this first vision, because a plain explanation of them is given by Christ himself. Yet, as the same symbolical language runs through all the other visions in this book, and as the meaning of the

the symbols is not explained in every one, though it is in several of them, but is to be learned only from a knowledge of the symbolical language, it will be highly proper, that I make a few explanatory observations on the hieroglyphics used in this vision.

As the symbolical language was invented in a very early and simple stage of civil society, the resemblance between the symbol, and the thing signified, must always be obvious and striking, and never far-fetched or whimsical. Let us examine the symbols in this vision upon this principle. These we shall examine with peculiar advantage, because Christ hath told us their meaning beforehand. He hath done so, probably for this reason among others, that, with the more certainty, in the entry of this book, we might discover the key to the language in which it is written.

The personage, whom John saw, was "like unto the Son of man;" a name by which Christ, in consequence of his having assumed the human nature, is well known in scripture; a name by which he was pointed out, in the vision which Daniel saw, chap. x. 16. "Clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle; his eyes were as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters." This is the very dress and appearance

pearance of the Son of man in the foresaid vision to Daniel, chap. x. verses 5. 6. The dress, both in that vision and this, is borrowed from that of the high priest under the law; and is therefore a proper symbol of Christ, the high priest of our profession. The brightness and piercing appearance of his eyes signify his perfect knowledge and clear discernment of every thing. His feet, like brass in a furnace, signify the purity and stability of his human nature, notwithstanding the most fiery trials to which he was exposed. John says, "his voice was as the sound of many waters;" and Daniel says, "and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." This apparent difference in their descriptions, is a strong confirmation of the truth of their testimony, that the two descriptions apply to the same person, because many waters in the symbolical language signify a multitude. Thus it is explained, Rev. xvii. 1. 15.—"The great whore that sitteth upon many waters. And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are people, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." When two witnesses agree in saying the same thing in different words, much more credit is due to them, than to those witnesses who agree in every single word which they use. The latter case, by their too exact agreement in all the words, looks like a concerted story; but the former, by an exact agreement

reement in meaning, whilst there is a difference in words, looks like the testimony of honest and intelligent men, without any previous concert, simply telling the real truth, each in his own language. By this account of his voice, it is signified, that the sacred scriptures, the words of his mouth, shall be translated into different languages; shall in due time be made known to men of every country of the world, and shall reach down to the latest periods of time. As waters most commonly signify multitudes in a tumultuous state, probably by this symbol it is meant, that amid all the tumults and revolutions predicted in this book, Jesus shall "still the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people."

In the middle of this description, John mentions one striking particular, of which Daniel takes no notice in his vision, chap. x. "That his head and his hair, were white like wool, as white as snow." White hair is the symbol of old age, great wisdom, and dignity. It is the symbolical description which is given of God as the Ancient of days, in Daniel vii. 9. The obvious reason of this difference is, that Daniel describes the human nature of Christ, as the Son of man, chap. x. 16. and the divine nature, or true God, chap. vii. 9. ; but John, in this hieroglyphic, describes both the divine and the human nature in the person of Christ, and therefore must join the two descriptions of Daniel together,

ther, to mark fully the personage whom he describes. He thus marks this personage to be Jesus Christ, in whom only the divine and human nature are united.

“In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.” A candlestick formed for placing a candle upon, in such a situation as to make its light more diffusive and beneficial, fitly represents a constituted church, which is calculated to spread the light of truth and religion. It is “golden,” in reference to the golden candlestick in the tabernacle and temple of God, and thus to show that it is the church of God, constituted after the heavenly pattern, in opposition to those churches, which are marked more by the institutions of men than by the ordinances of God. Being in the midst of the seven candlesticks, Christ is never far from his churches, to see their conduct, and to protect or scourge them, as their conduct and situation require.

“And he had in his right hand seven stars.” The stars, which have no light of their own, but only reflect the light of the sun upon men, to guide them during the night, when they are not blessed with the rays of the sun, are very proper symbols of the ministers of the gospel, who communicate to men the light of that truth and righteousness, which they have received from Christ the Sun of righteousness; by which they enlight-

en the church of Christ, now when he hath withdrawn his personal ministry from this world.

The right hand is the symbol of skill and power. Our English word dexterity, which comprehends both, is derived from *dexter*, the Latin word for the right hand. Christ, by his skill, wisdom, and power, directs and protects the ministers of his church. Guided by the wisdom which is from above, though harmless as doves, they shall be wise as serpents. Supported by the arm of Christ, though weak in themselves, they shall be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Before their ministrations can be rendered ineffectual, they must be assaulted by a wisdom and power, greater than those of Christ. But where shall greater wisdom and power be found, than those which are divine and infinite? "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hand."

"And out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword." This is the scripture symbol of the word of God, or sacred scriptures, which proceed out of the mouth of Christ. Eph. vi. 17.—"And the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Heb. iv. 12.—"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword." The word of God is the proper sword of those persons, the weapons of whose warfare are not carnal but spiritual. It is the only offensive weapon provided for
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the foldier of Jesus in the whole armour of God, Eph. vi. 13,—18. It is by this sword of the Spirit, chiefly, that the great enemy of Christ and of Christianity delineated in this book, shall be finally destroyed; as shall appear in the explication of verses 13th, 14th, and 15th, of chap. xix.

“And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.” The sun shines with real light, inherent in, and darted from itself; not, like the stars, with a light reflected from another body. The sun, therefore, is the proper symbol of Jesus Christ, “the sun of righteousness, who is the light of the world.” In his divine nature, he hath truth and righteousness inherent in himself. The underyed rays of divinity shone through the veil of his human nature, when he appeared among men. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

C H A P. II.

Verse 1st.—**U**NTO the angel of the church of Ephesus, write, these things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

Christ commands John to write to the minister of the church of Ephesus. From verse 11th, chap. i. it appears that John wrote the whole book of the Revelation, and sent it to the seven Christian churches then in Asia Minor. Whether he wrote seven copies of it, and sent one to each of them, which is most probable, or sent the original, from which they took six copies for themselves, is not told us, and indeed is of no great consequence for us to know.

By sending this book to these seven churches, not only were they favoured with the important instructions which it contains; but a very wise precaution was taken to preserve it in existence and purity to succeeding ages. Lodged in seven different churches, it was not very probable that all the copies of it should be destroyed, or that so
many

many churches should conspire to corrupt it by interpolations of their own.

Along with the book of the Revelation, or rather as a part of it, John wrote a short epistle to the minister of each of these churches. In these epistles he gives, by the command, and in the very words of Christ, an exact and minute description of their respective characters and situations, and exhorts them to correct what in them is wrong in sentiment and conduct; and to improve what is right. By this minute description of their real character, he not only taught them their duty, but also led them to acknowledge the inspiration of this book. When, in the particular epistle addressed to each church, they were told so exactly those sentiments and that conduct, which they knew to be their own, could they entertain a doubt of the inspiration of this book, or of the power of its divine Author of describing as exactly the sentiments and conduct of other persons and churches in every age of the world?

The argument addressed to them is the same which convinced the woman of Samaria, John iv. 19. that Jesus was the Messiah. When Jesus told her all her real and even secret history, she said, verse 19th, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." And she thus addressed the inhabitants of Sychar, verse 29th, "Come, see a man

“ who told me all things that ever I did ; Is not
“ this the Christ ? ”

The epistles addressed to the pastors of these churches, were addressed to them, not in their private, but in their public characters, as pastors of their particular churches ; for the things contained in them evidently relate to the whole church.

Ephesus was the principal city of Ionia, and even of Asia Minor. The gospel was planted in it by Paul, as mentioned in Acts xix. near twenty years before the date of this book. From Ephesus the knowledge of Christianity spread through the rest of Asia Minor. In this city stood the famous temple of the goddess Diana. To the Christian church planted in that city, Paul wrote the canonical epistle, which is addressed to the Ephesians, about seven years after he had founded that church.

The epistle contained in the first seven verses of this chapter, addressed to the church of Ephesus, is all written in the name, and in the very words of Christ.

“ These things saith he who holdeth the seven
“ stars in his right hand.” Christ is here described by two of the particular symbols, which are contained in the general hieroglyphical description of his person and character, chap. i. 12,—16. It is he who guides and supports his ministers by his
wisdom

wisdom and power, extended to them in his providence and grace. It is he who inspects his churches, perceives what is good and bad in them and administers praise and reproof accordingly.

Verses 2d, 3d.—I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil : and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not ; and hast found them liars : and hast born, and hast patience, and for my names sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

This, and all the other six epistles, Christ begins, by assuring these churches, that he knows their works. As the Son of God, he knows all their works perfectly. He knows all their actions, public, private, and secret ; all their intentions, and the motives of their conduct. He searches their hearts, and tries their reins. As a full proof that he knows their works, he particularly enumerates them. He praises them for their labour, their diligent endeavours to detect impostors, and to propagate the truth,—their patience under persecution for the religion of Jesus, to which, at this time, they were exposed under Domitian,—and
for

for estimating men, not by their external appendages, but by their real characters. Like the citizen of Zion, they despised vile men, but honoured them that fear the Lord. He praises them for their care in trying, and for their success in detecting false apostles, who neither taught the doctrines of Jesus in their purity, nor produced proper credentials of their extraordinary commission. Christ repeats their long-suffering, their patience, and their labour, to show that they had long continued in the practice of these virtues; and that he might take notice of that principle, from which they acted, and which preserved them from fainting under their persecutions, even an attachment to his name. It was because they believed and trusted in him as the Christ, and the Son of God; it was because they ardently desired to promote the knowledge of his name, and the interest of his religion in the world; in fine, it was because they firmly believed his religion to be the truth; that they practised such things, and persevered in that course with such patience, at the expence of their property, liberty, and fame, and at the risk of their lives.

Verse 4th—Nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

As

As there is no particuler church on earth perfectly pure, it is not to be expected, that, in the church at Ephesus, there should be every thing to be praised, and nothing to be blamed. Christ reproves that church for having fallen from the ardour of her first love. Supreme love to God, sincere love to all men, brotherly love to the household of faith, and a strong and steady love to truth and holiness, are indispensably necessary in a Christian. The first fruit of the Spirit is love. The first and great commandment is to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and the second is like to it, to love our neighbour as ourselves. It is not uncommon for new converts, to feel and express a greater ardour of love at first, than they do afterwards. This was the case with the church, at Ephesus. But the commonness of the fault does not diminish the guilt.

Verse 5th.—Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

This church is called upon to recollect the former ardour of their love, to compare it with their
present

present indifference of mind, sincerely to repent of their sins, and to express their repentance by such actions, as those which formerly flowed from their first love. "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Christ assures them, that, if they do not repent, he will come unto them, in the course of his providence, and quickly deprive them of the benefit of a constituted church among them. It is highly probable, that this church did not repent; and that, therefore, the threatened judgement was brought upon it; for, long before the time in which I write, there was no Christian church in that place, which was once the famous church and city of Ephesus.

Verse 6th—But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

This church is praised for hating the deeds of the Nicolaitans. This sect abounded in Asia about the time John wrote this book. It took its name from Nicolas its founder. Clement, Epiphanius, Austin, Eusebius, and other ancient writers, give large accounts of the erroneous principles and vicious practices of this sect. As it long ago sunk into that oblivion; which its own impurity deserved, it is unnecessary, and would be improper

proper to trouble the reader with a particular account of it. Its votaries allowed and practised fornication, adultery, and idolatrous sacrifices. These deeds the church at Ephesus hated; and these are hateful to Christ.

Verse 7th.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Whoever hears the things contained in this epistle, let him, for his own interest, attend to what the Spirit of God saith to all the churches. Tho' the church of Ephesus, as a collective body, may not repent, and therefore may be deprived of the privilege of a constituted church, yet no individual Christian, who acts a proper part, shall be deprived of the internal and spiritual blessings of religion, for the fault of others, or even of that church of which he is a member. Every individual Christian, who overcomes the temptations to which he is exposed, and especially those trying ones, which arise from communion with a church grossly corrupted, and from the example of impure sectaries, whatever he may lose of worldly possessions, shall enjoy the intellectual, the moral,

the spiritual life, with all its concomitant pleasures in the present and future world. This is the import of "eating of the tree of life, which is "in the midst of the paradise of God." This hieroglyphic is taken from the account of the tree of life, in the midst of the paradise of God, contained in Genesis ii. 8,—9, 16,—17. and iii. 22,—24. That tree of life was the symbol of the spiritual, intellectual, and moral life of man, which consists in perceiving, feeling, intending, acting, and enjoying, as such a creature as man was intended to do, and ought to do. This spiritual life stands in the closest connection with the innocence, or renovation of our nature, and is inconsistent with the gross perversion of it. Hence, from the fore-cited passages, we find, that Adam was not prohibited from the tree of life, so long as he preserved his innocence; but whenever he yielded to temptation, and ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he was prohibited from the tree of life, and a guard was placed around it. As Adam, by yielding to temptation, deprived himself of the tree of life, so, whoever by the grace of God shall resist and overcome temptations, shall receive from Christ, and enjoy in the present, and more perfectly in a future state, that spiritual life, of which the tree of life in the middle of the garden was the emblem. Rom. viii. 6.—"To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded

" is

“ is life and peace.” Christ saith, (John x. 10.)
 “ I am come that they might have life, and that
 “ they might have it more abundantly.” They
 shall possess that spiritual life which is the perfec-
 tion and the bliss of human nature.

Verse 8.—And unto the angel of the church
 in Smyrna, write, these things saith the first
 and the last, which was dead, and is alive ;

Christ commands John to write this epistle to
 the minister of the church in Smyrna, and designs
 himself by a part of that hieroglyphic, under which
 he appeared in the first vision. Particularly, he
 styles himself the first and the last, true God ; and
 he who was dead and is alive again, true man.
 This description of his character was very proper
 to administer comfort and support to the church in
 Smyrna. Their character was aspersed. How
 comforting, to think that Christ, as God, knows
 their real character ; and cannot possibly be
 misled by any misrepresentations? Many of
 them were to suffer death from the hands of
 their persecutors: How comforting to know, that
 Christ, by his own death, had taken the sting out
 of death to all his followers, and, by his resur-
 rection, had given them the fullest proof and the
 surest pledge of their resurrection? Smyrna, as

well as Ephesus, was a city of Ionia, and the next to it in size.

Verse 9.—I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them who say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

Christ informs this church, that he knows their whole conduct and situation; that he is well acquainted with their tribulation and outward poverty; but, at the same time, that he who judgeth not as men judgeth, but who looks unto the heart, knows that they are spiritually rich, rich in faith, in love, and in good works.

By *Jews*, in the symbolical language of this book, we are to understand the true worshippers of God under that dispensation of revealed religion, under which it was written, that is, the Christian. In this sense, the term Jew and Israelite are used in other parts of the New Testament, Rom. ii. 28, 29. ix. 6. John 1. 47.

The Synagogue of Satan signifies any religious sect, whose principles are erroneous, and whose practice is impure; because Satan is the source of all falsehood and sin. He first tempted and misled men; and, though the erroneous and wicked acknowledge

acknowledge it not, and perhaps perceive it not, he still worketh in the children of disobedience. They are the slaves of Satan. John viii. 44.—“Ye
“ are of your father the devil; and the lusts of
“ your father ye will do: He was a murderer
“ from the beginning, and abode not in the truth,
“ because there is no truth in him. When he
“ speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is
“ a liar, and the father of it. 1 John iii. 10.—“In
“ this the children of God are manifest, and the
“ children of the devil: whosoever doeth not
“ righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.”

It would appear from this verse, that, at that time, there was some religious sect in Smyrna, of erroneous principles, and impure practices, who pretended that they were true Christians, and who misrepresented and aspersed the character of the church in Smyrna. Christ informs this church that he knows the principles and practices of that sect, however secret, and that he considers their calumnies of them as blasphemies against God himself. Luke x. 16.—“He that despiseth you,
“ despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.” 1 Thess. iv. 8.—“He
“ therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man but
“ God.”

Verse

Verse 10.—Fear none of those things, which thou shalt suffer : behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days : Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

It is predicted that this church should be exposed to a severe trial and persecution for ten days. In the language of prophecy, a day is the symbol for a year, as shall be shown afterwards, when we come to consider the more highly prophetic parts of this book. But it is most probable, that ten days here are taken literally for that space of time. It is unnecessary to give the reason of this opinion here, as it will fall to be explained afterwards, when it shall be shewn, when, in prophetic writings, a day signifies an ordinary day, and when it signifies a year.

It is predicted, without any condition, that this church shall have tribulation for ten days. We may conclude, therefore, that this prediction has been accomplished ; and we ought to look for its accomplishment in the history of this church. Accordingly, in the reign of the emperor Antoninus Pius, A. D. 147, many members of the church of Smyrna were cast into prison, tortured, exhibited on the theatre, and cast to be devoured by lions. Last of all, Polycarp, the minister of
Smyrna,

Smyrna, was burnt at a stake. By his death a stop was put to this persecution. It appears to have been raised by the Heathens, at the time of their public shews, and to have lasted about ten days. *Bp. Pearson's Diff. Chron.* i. p. 11. a cap. xiv. ad xx. *Circular Letter of the Church of Smyrna concerning the Martyrdom of Polycarp.*

Christ exhorts this church, and every member of it, to fear none of those things, and to be faithful to the death; to adhere, with the most unshaken fidelity, to the belief of the doctrines, the observance of the ordinances, and the obedience of the precepts of the gospel; in one word, to conduct themselves, in every respect, in the most strict conformity to the profession, which real Christians make, though, for that fidelity to the truth as it is in Jesus, they should be persecuted even to the death. To them who are thus faithful unto the death he promises a crown of life. By a crown of life we are not to understand a living or never-fading crown. Unless the quality of the crown is determined, the eternity of its duration can give us no idea of its value and importance. The mere continuance of existence is neither a blessing nor a curse of itself, but increases either, when added to it. If the situation of any person is miserable, it must greatly increase his misery that he is immortal. But, by the crown of life, the nature of the crown is specified. It is *life*; it is the spiritual
life

life of an intelligent, rational, and moral creature ; a life which is eternal. This life consists in being freed from the condemning sentence of God, as his offended judge ; in being renewed by the Spirit of God, in the spirit of his mind ; and in perceiving, feeling, acting, and enjoying, as such a creature as man was intended to do, ought to do, and always does, when his nature is in a state of rectitude. This is the greatest blessing which man can possess. Without this, he cannot be really happy in the possession of any external good. Possessed of this, he enjoys all things. This is the very blessing which depraved man needs : For he is dead in trespasses and sins. This is the very blessing which Christ came into this world to purchase for and bestow upon men, John x. 10. This is that blessing, which, under the influence of divine grace, is formed by faithfulness unto death. It is by this faithfulness unto death, that the change wrought in him, at conversion, by the agency of the Spirit of God, is brought to perfection. It is thus, that his evil habits are gradually eradicated, that his wise and good resolutions are, by degrees, confirmed into lasting habits of head and of heart ; and that he at death, is brought to the full stature of a perfect man in Christ Jesus. This crown of life is the free gift of Christ, to those who are faithful unto the death, Rom. viii. 1.--13.

Verse

Verse 11.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches, He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Every person who hears this epistle is called upon in a most solemn manner to attend to its import. Whatever may be the conduct of others, no individual shall be hurt, as to his final state, by any bad conduct but his own. Though others may not be faithful to the death; though others may yield to the temptations to which they are exposed; no one who overcomes the temptations by which he is surrounded, and continues faithful to the death, shall ever be hurt of the second death. In chap. xx, 12,—15. we have an account of the second death. It is that endless and hopeless misery, to which the impenitently wicked shall be consigned, immediately after the general judgement. It is a state directly opposite to that crown of life promised, in the preceding verse, to the faithful Christian. It is denominated the second death, to distinguish it from that death which consists in the dissolution of the body, and thereby, in the separation of soul and body, which is called the first death. Hence the import of the promise in this verse is, that the Christian, by resisting temptation, may sometimes be exposed to death, yet he shall be no loser thereby; for he shall not be hurt by the second death. Wicked men

and devils, when permitted by God, may inflict the first death upon the faithful servants of Christ; but none of them, nor all of them combined, can inflict upon them the second death. Christ saith, Matth. x. 28. and 39. "Fear not them who kill the body; but are not able to kill the soul. He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life, for my sake, shall find it."

Verse 12.—And unto the angel of the church in Pergamos, write, these things saith he, which hath the sharp sword, with the two edges.

This epistle is addressed to the minister of the Christian church in Pergamos, a famous city of Mysia Major in Asia Minor. It was for a long time the capital of a great state called the kingdom of Pergamus; and several cities were under its jurisdiction. About 132 years before the birth of Christ, Attalus Philometer, the last king of Pergamus, died; who, by his last will, had made the people of Rome his heirs. That people, a few years after, took possession of the kingdom by this title; and then Pergamus became the residence of a Roman proconsul.

In this epistle, Christ designs himself "him who hath the sharp sword with two edges." This sword of the Spirit, which proceeds out of the
mouth

mouth of Christ, is the word of God, those scriptures which are given by inspiration of God. It is two-edged, because sacred scripture is equally well formed for defending the Christian, and giving the deepest wounds to his enemies. Like a two-edged sword, every part of sacred scripture is fitted for use. The scriptures are equally calculated, to administer instruction and reproof; and, as both are needed in this church, and both are administered in this epistle, it was highly proper that the divine Author of it should design himself as he does in this verse.

Verse 13th.—I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith; even in those days, wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you where Satan dwelleth.

In this, as in all the other epistles, Christ informs the church that he knows their works. This church is said to dwell where Satan's seat is. As the devil is the author of all idolatry, and most commonly the object of it, wherever idolatry greatly prevails, there Satan may be said to have his seat. On this account, as shall appear in the course of this book, both Heathen and Papal Rome are said to be the seat of the dragon, who is the

devil. In a particular manner, Satan's seat is said to be at Pergamos, on account of the great number of heathen temples and idols in that city, and particularly on account of the temple of *Æsculapius*, who was worshipped there under the figure of a serpent. For, from the first temptation of mankind, by the devil in the form, or by the instrumentality of a serpent, the devil is still represented by, and even called a serpent. In chap. xii. 9, 14, 15, he is called a serpent no less than three times. Besides this great temple in which *Æsculapius* was worshipped in the form of a serpent, there was a temple in Pergamos in honour of the city of Rome and the emperor Augustus, and also a temple of *Diana*. In this situation, peculiarly trying and dangerous, this church adhered to the profession of the Christian name, to the belief of the Christian faith, and to a correspondent practice. The time when this epistle was written to them was no less trying than their situation was, for persecution then raged to such a degree, that, in that city, Antipas, a faithful martyr of Christ, was slain.

Verse 14th.—But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before

fore the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

Though this church was highly commendable for her fidelity to the Christian faith, in the most trying situation and times, yet there were some things in her character which deserved reproof and correction. She is reproved, in particular, for allowing some to live in communion with her, who held the same errors, which marked the character and conduct of Balaam, when he advised Balak, the king of Moab, to cast a stumbling block before the people of Israel, by which, as in Numb. xxv. 1, 2. and xxxi. 16. they were led to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication.

Verse 15th.—So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

She is also reproved for not censuring some of her members, who held the doctrines of the Nicolaitans. These were explained on the sixth verse. Both in that place and this, Christ declares that he hates these doctrines. Such a declaration, always repeated whenever they are mentioned, strongly marks them as highly criminal and odious.

dious. This church is not reprov'd, because persons, who held the doctrines of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans, lived in the town of Pergamos. Had they merely lived in that town, she would have been no more accountable for their errors, and would have been no more reprov'd by Christ for them; than she would have been for those of the votaries of Augustus, Æsculapius, or Diana, who lived in Pergamos, and worshipp'd in the three temples of these heathen deities. But she is reprov'd, because she allowed persons, who openly held these errors, to live in communion with her, and to enjoy the privileges of the Christian name and church. She ought to have given them a first and second admonition; and if, after these, they had obstinately adhered to their errors and sins, she should have reject'd them from the communion of the church, according to the scripture rule. Titus iii. 10.—“A man that is an heretic “after the first and second admonition reject.”

Verse 16th.—Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against thee with the sword of my mouth,

Christ calls upon them to repent of their neglect of discipline, assuring them that, if they did not, he would quickly come unto them, and inflict upon them those judgements which, in the sacred

sacred scriptures, are denounced upon those who obstinately adhere to dangerous errors and sins. In reproving them for the neglect of discipline, Christ says that he will fight against them with "the sword of his mouth;" thereby intimating, that the discipline observed in Christian churches should not be penances of merely human institution; but all that discipline, and that only which is appointed in the sacred scriptures for the church of Christ; and that, however, in consequence of human refinements, those churches which neglect discipline may escape the censure, perhaps meet the approbation of the men of the world at least, they must draw upon themselves the judgements denounced, in the word of God, against those who fear man more than God, and desire the praise of men more than the praise of God.

Verse 17th.—He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it.

Every person who hears this epistle is called upon seriously to attend to its import; because it

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was dictated by the unerring Spirit of God, and contains most important reproof and instruction for all, in every age, who shall be placed in a situation similar to that of the church in Pergamos. To every individual, who overcomes the temptations to which he is exposed, Christ will give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone.

The hidden manna is a symbolical phrase taken from the command, which God gave to the Israelites in Exodus xvi. 32,—34, to lay up an omer full of manna in a golden pot, in the ark of the covenant, in the most holy place in the tabernacle, as a perpetual memorial of the food, by which God miraculously fed them, for forty years in the wilderness. Of this hidden manna the apostle speaks, in Heb. ix. 4. This hidden manna was also a type of Christ, the bread of life, John vi. 48,—58. The manna which fell in the fields was gathered and eaten by all the Israelites; without exception, as their daily food, while they were in the wilderness; but, during that period, or rather during the whole period of the Mosaic dispensation, not one of them was allowed to eat of the hidden manna, which was laid up in the ark of the covenant, and continued there, until Christ appeared as the bread of life, when a more perfect and spiritual dispensation was opened up. Hence to eat of the hidden manna, is not only to have their souls nourished and

and, strengthened by the spiritual provision which the gospel affords in this world ; but also to partake of that spiritual food, in its higher state of perfection forever in the heavenly world, to which the gospel dispensation is preparatory. It is to have their souls nourished up to eternal life. It is to worship, serve and enjoy God, in purity and perfection, forever in heaven ; of which place and state the holy place, in which the hidden manna was laid up, is a type. In fine, it is to glorify and enjoy God forever, as directed by the word of God and the dispensations of grace by Jesus Christ, of which the ark of the covenant, in which this manna was hid, was a type.

The white stone is a symbol taken from an antient, but well known custom, in courts of judicature, of delivering a white stone to those pannels who upon trial were absolved, and a black stone to those who were condemned. But, in this white stone, there is something which was not in the white stone of absolution, in the antient courts. For, in this stone, there was a new name engraven, a name which none knoweth, saving he that receiveth it. By the white stone which Christ shall *give* them, it is meant, that God “ shall justify them freely “ by his grace, through the redemption that is in “ Jesus Christ.” A mere absolution from guilt, and deliverance from condemnation, is not the whole of the blessing which is promised ; for, in

the white stone, a new name is written. This inscription is essentially different from the white stone; but being engraven in it, it is inseparable from it, and given by God along with the white stone. This new name is the name of *sons of God*, which in scripture is given to those, "who being in Christ Jesus are *new creatures*, from whom old things are passed away, and to whom all things are become new." Gall. vi. 15.—"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a *new creature*." In their perverted state, their old name was that of sons of men; or, in the language of scripture, children of the devil: But, "having put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and having been renewed in the spirit of their mind, and having put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," the new name of sons of God is given to them. This renovation of their nature is the gift of God, through the mediation of Christ, the agency of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth, as well as their justification is; and though, in its own nature, it is distinct from justification, it is in fact inseparable from it, like the new name, which is inseparable from the white stone in which it is engraven. John i. 12, 13.—"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the
"sons

“ sons of God, even to them that believe on his
 “ name : which were born, not of blood, nor of
 “ the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but
 “ of God.” Rom. viii. 30.—“ Whom he called;
 “ them he also justified ; and whom he justified,
 “ them he also glorified.”

The excellency of the character, and the purity, sublimity, and permanency of the enjoyment, expressed by the name of sons of God, are the greatest to which the nature of man is capable of being raised. Rom. viii. 17.—“ And if children, then
 “ heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.” 1 John iii. 1,—3.—“ Behold what manner of love
 “ the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we
 “ should be called the sons of God : therefore the
 “ world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.
 “ Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it
 “ doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we
 “ know that, when he shall appear, we shall be
 “ like him ; for we shall see him as he is.”

This new name no man knoweth, saving he who hath received it. The degenerated sons of men, the children of the devil, are perfectly ignorant of that excellency, which consists in the restoration of the image of God to the soul of man, and of that happiness which consists in the enjoyment of God. Their ignorance of the new nature, the spiritual life, is no singularity in nature ; it is analogous to what takes place among all the orders of God's crea-

tures. Those which are of an inferior nature, and possess a life of an inferior kind, can form no distinct perception of the nature of life of a superior kind. For instance, vegetables, possessed of vegetable life, know nothing of animal life ; and mere animals know nothing of spiritual life ; Why then should it be surprising that the sons of men know not the nature and the spiritual life of the sons of God ? 1 Cor. ii. 12, 14.—“ Now we have
 “ received, not the spirit of the world, but the
 “ spirit which is of God ; that we might know the
 “ things that are freely given us of God. But the
 “ natural man receiveth not the things of the
 “ spirit of God ; for they are foolishness unto him ;
 “ neither can he know them, because they are
 “ spiritually discerned.”

Verse 18.—And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write ; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brags.

This epistle is addressed to the minister of the church in Thyatira. This was a very considerable city of Lydia, in Asia Minor, under the jurisdiction of Pergamus. See *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. 5. c. 30. Some persons belonging to this city were early converted to Christianity, by the ministration

tion of Paul and Silas, as appears from Acts xvi. 14, 15. Christ takes, in this epistle, his well known name of the Son of God. His perfect knowledge and clear discernment are expressed by eyes like a flame of fire, and his stability and purity by feet like fine brass. These two features of his hieroglyphical character were peculiarly proper to be exhibited to this church, when he was about to describe the concealed parts of their character, and to reprove them for their impurity.

Verse 19th.—I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first.

Christ mentions, with high approbation, the charity of this church, consisting in supreme love to God, and sincere love to man,—her service, consisting in her attendance upon, and beneficial services to the poor, the sick, and the afflicted. The word, translated service, is that which signifies the work of a deacon, whose office was to attend to the situation of the poor and sick. He praises her for her faith, that is, her distinct and firm belief, and hearty approbation of all the truths of the gospel;—her patience under the trials and persecutions to which she had been exposed; and her works, that is, her outward conduct in every respect, correspondent to her

her charity, faith, and patience, and particularly for making daily progress in all these graces and virtues of the Christian life.

Verse 20th,—23d.—Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Behold I will cast her unto a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

In these verses Christ reproves this church for not discountenancing a false teacher, who laid claim to inspiration, and taught in that city with considerable success, certain impure and impious tenets and practices. She was very artful, and too successful in seducing the servants of Christ. On that account she is called Jezebel, and compared to the person of that name, wife to Ahab king of Israel,

Israel, who artfully misled the elders and nobles of the city of Naboth to become her instruments, in unjustly taking away the life and vineyard of Naboth, under the mask of religion and law. She also induced King Ahab to encourage impurity and idolatry. The various particulars relative to Jezebel are recorded in the whole 21st chapter of 1 Kings. For such wickedness God sent the prophet Elijah to denounce judgements on Jezebel, and the house of Ahab, so exactly corresponding to the sins of which she had been guilty, that it should clearly appear that God perfectly knew her conduct, however artful, secret, and disguised; and that he rendered unto her according to her works. Ahab having humbled himself before God, these punishments were not inflicted, in their full extent, on his family, in his day; but they were all inflicted on Jezebel, and their children, as appears from 2 Kings chap: ix. and x.

The reader is desired to peruse the 21st chap. of 1 Kings, and these two, with attention, as they contain a most striking history of the character of Jezebel, and a beautiful and awful account of the omniscience of God, and of the impartiality of his justice in the government of the world. In like manner, Christ says, that he had given this false prophets at Thyatira time to repent, as he had given Jezebel; but like her, she repented not. That, therefore, he would punish her and her votaries

taries in as striking and exemplary a manner as he had punished Jezebel.

As the manner of Jezebel's punishments fully proved that God knew the secrets of her heart, and punished her according to her works; so the punishment of this false prophetess should be inflicted in such a manner as to afford a striking proof to all the churches, that Christ searches the reins and heart, and gives to every one according to his works.

It is very probable, that this false prophetess did not repent. For, now, not so much as the trace or name of that town is left; but only some slender remains of inscriptions, not easily to be found; like the skull, feet, hands, and blood of Jezebel, as mentioned in 2 Kings ix. 35. A long time ago it was only a small village, called *Ak-biffar*, consisting of houses built of earth upon the ruins of the ancient Thyatira; and there is not one Christian church in it. See *Sir George Wheeler*, *Dr Smith*, and *Dr Spon*.

Verse 24th, 25th.—But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak, I will put upon you none other burthen, but that which ye have already, hold fast till I come.

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This church, and every individual in it, who are not misled by the doctrines of Jezebel, and who have not known the depths of Satan are assured that Christ will lay no other burthen upon them, than that which they have already. Some are of opinion, that by the depths of Satan are meant certain secret books, in which were contained the mysteries of the erroneous sects mentioned in this and some others of these epistles. It is true, that many of the early erroneous sects had certain secret mysteries which they concealed from all, excepting their confirmed members: Such secret mysteries are a sure proof of the falsehood of the secret doctrines, for truth is not afraid of the light, and is never hurt by it. Men love darkness rather than light only when their tenets and their deeds are evil.

I am of opinion, that men are said to know the depths of Satan, when by his temptation they are brought to commit sins and crimes under the mask of religion and law: It was thus that Jezebel and the elders and nobles of Israel unjustly took away the life and vineyard of Naboth, under the mask of religion and the form of law, 1 Kings xxi. 7—14; to which, in my opinion, reference is made here. To make men impious under the mask of religion, and unjust under the shelter of law, is the very depth of Satan's art of deceiving, a depth too from which he draws out temptations in every age and country, in this way he leads men to the greatest length

in sin, and keeps them for a long time in the practice of it, because he deceives both them and the generality of the men of the world around them. However bad their actions are, neither they nor the world see their impiety and malignity when they stand connected with religion : Thus for instance, all the shocking barbarities and injustice of the Croisades, instead of shocking the perpetrators or spectators, were considered by both as the most glorious actions, because connected with and viewed as a part of religion : Thus too, all persecutions for conscience sake, and all *pious frauds*, as they are called, are for the same reason, not offensive to superstitious and enthusiastic men : Thus in despotic governments, civil and criminal laws are often made inconsistent with the natural and unalienable rights of men, and with the laws of God ; and men go on sinning against the laws of God and violating the rights of man, without ever thinking that they are doing wrong, merely because they are acting according to the laws of their country. Even in the free countries, there may be some laws and customs by which men are led heedlessly to practise cruelty and injustice. Suppose a merchant in the African Trade should employ sailors to pick up and sell for slaves all the poor men they could meet with in the streets of London or Liverpool, would not his conduct shock himself, shock mankind around him, and
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make him be hissed out of society, even though the laws of the land were not to call him to account? How happens it then, that, without shocking himself or his countrymen, he can employ sailors to pick up and sell for slaves hundreds of poor men on the coast of Guinea? it is because in the last place, he violates the natural rights of man under the shelter of law.—Probably both may be comprehended under the depths of Satan. Christ assures all the members of this church who are not infected by these errors, that nothing shall ever be binding upon them in matters of religion, except these things which are already binding upon them by the sacred scriptures, these things by which they have hitherto regulated their faith, charity, service, patience, and works; and he exhorts them to hold these fast till he come, that is, till he shall come to put an end to their state of discipline by their death.

Verses 26th,—29th.—And he that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, (and he shall rule them with a rod of iron, as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers), even as I received of my Father; and I will give him the morning star. He that
hath

hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

These verses seem to contain a promise not to the members of the church of Thyatira in particular, but to these Christians in general who shall overcome the temptations to which they are exposed from the depths of Satan, and shall keep the works of Christ unto the end of that period in which the world is to be misled by the depths of Satan. From the address in the beginning of verse 24th, "Unto you I say, and to the rest in Thyatira," it appears that the 24th and 25th verses are addressed particularly to the members of that church, and then what follows in the four last verses of this chapter seems to be addressed in general to those who shall overcome the depths of Satan, and keep the works of Christ to the end of that period to which the depths of Satan relate.

In chap. xx, 1,—3.—The particular time is predicted when Satan shall be restrained from deceiving the nations for a thousand years. When that time shall come, the time meant by the end of the depths of Satan shall arrive. In what year of the Christian æra this time shall happen, will be shewn in the commentary on that passage.

The persons to whom the promise is made are those who overcome the depths of Satan and keep the works of Christ to the end. They overcome
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the depths of Satan who are not misled either by the superstitions of false religion, or the unrighteous laws of men to sin against God, or violate the natural and unalienable rights of mankind. They who thus overcome the depths of Satan in rejecting the domination of superstition and tyranny, do not reject religious and civil authority, but a steady regard to both in conformity to the best rule the world ever saw, marks their character; they keep the works of Christ. By the doctrines, ordinances, and precepts of Christ they regulate the whole of their religion; and superstition has no hold of them; as citizens they also keep the works of Christ, they act a proper part under that government, of whatever form it is, of which they are citizens. "They render un-
" to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due,
" custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour
" to whom honour, and they owe no man any thing
" but to love one another: They fear God and ho-
" nour the king, they render to Cæsar the things
" that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that
" are God's; they are subject not only for wrath,
" but for conscience sake." They are good citizens from principle. But the fear of God, which makes them good citizens from principle, hinders them from doing acts of injustice, and inhumanity, or acts in any respect sinful, though permitted or connived at by law. And if at any time, the laws of
men

men should be evidently contrary to the laws of God, though that interference should give them much uneasiness, they would in these cases, obey God rather than man, though for obeying God they should forfeit their property, their liberty, and even their lives, to the unjust and tyrannical laws of men.

Such is the character of those to whom the blessings contained in these verses are promised: This character the world in general hath been gradually forming since the sixteenth century of the Christian æra, and shall form it with an accelerated motion for two hundred years yet to come, and such shall be the character of the world at the end of the depths of Satan, when the promises contained in these verses shall be performed. The world is going on and shall go on in shaking off the chains of superstition and tyranny, until they shall as men and as citizens keep the works of Christ: Then to those of this character Christ will give power over the nations, even as he received of his Father. This is a prediction of the triumphant state of Christ's church, which shall take place when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, which is fully predicted in chapters 19, 20, 21, and 22d of this book, and shall be explained in the commentary on these chapters. It was also predicted in Psalm ii. 8, 9. which is
cited

cited in the 27th verse now under our consideration. It was predicted in Daniel vii. 27. "And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High."

He will also give them the *morning star*. By the morning star is meant Christ, as is evident from chap. xxii. 16. "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify to you these things in the churches; I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." At the glorious period of Christ's church predicted in that chapter, mankind shall entertain the most just views of the nature and character of Christ, and shall derive their religious knowledge so immediately from his word and spirit, that he will be as it were the star which conducts them. So far will he differ from the ministers of his religion who conduct his church in its present state, and so far will that state of his church differ from this, that he is styled the morning star, the star which ushers in the light of day, and which shines when all the other stars disappear because of the superior light of the sun. In chap. xxi. ver. 23. It is said of that state of the church under the hieroglyphic of the new Jerusalem, that "the Lamb is the light thereof." At that period they shall be in no danger of practising iniquity under the sanction of human laws, for
then

then the saints of the Most High shall have power over the nations, and the civil laws of men shall correspond to the righteous laws of God. Then they shall be in no danger of being misled to sin under the influence of superstition, for they shall receive the morning star. From the word and spirit of Christ they shall receive their religion. The promise of these blessings was well calculated to keep the Christians at Thyatira from knowing the depths of Satan. What could have a more powerful tendency to keep them from sinning against God or violating the unalienable rights of men under the influence of human laws and superstition, than a promise from him who could neither be deceived nor deceive, that the time would come in this world when all tyranny and superstition would be banished out of it by that pure and undefiled religion and that equitable and righteous civil government which accord to the gospel of Jesus as a system of truth, righteousness, peace and joy. And that though they should not live in this world to see that period, by overcoming the depths of Satan and keeping Christ's works to the end, they should be considered by God as martyrs or witnesses to the truth, in opposition to the laws, customs, and superstitions of the world, in the next world they would receive the martyrs crown, and even in this world when the triumphant period of Christ's church

church should come, their memories should be held in honourable remembrance, when those of the heroes of the world, who have deluged it in blood, shall be sunk into total oblivion.

This epistle, like all the preceding ones, is closed with a most solemn charge to all who hear it, seriously to consider and attend to it.

C H A P. III.

Verſe 1ſt. **A**ND unto the Angel of the church in Sardis write, Theſe things ſaith he that hath the ſeven ſpirits of God, and the ſeven ſtars ; I know thy works, that thou haſt a name that thou liveſt, and art dead.

Sardis was the metropolis of Lydia in Aſia Minor. It was antiently a magnificent city, and the ſeat of the Lydian kings ; it is now a ſmall poor village, inhabited by ſhepherds only, and a few ignorant Chriſtians without a church or a paſtor. See *Plin. Nat. Hiſt. l. v. c. 29. Dr Smith's Not. ſept. Aſia Eccl. p. 133.*)

Chriſt deſigns himſelf “ Him who hath the ſeven ſpirits of God, and the ſeven ſtars.” It is he who hath promiſed and who ſends to his church the other comforter the Holy Spirit ; he who takes a charge of his church and of the miniſters of religion in it, for he hath the ſtars in his right hand. Theſe parts of his character were peculiarly ſuited to the ſituation of this church. The church of Sardis had a good character outwardly, but in reality was deſtitute of the power and life of true religion.

gion. "He who hath the seven spirits of God," looks into the heart, desires truth only in the inward parts, and expresses his care of this church by directing her to cultivate the power, rather than to satisfy herself with the mere form of religion, and to desire the praise of God more than the praise of man. He tells her that he knows her works; in particular, that she is spiritually dead though she hath the reputation in the world of being spiritually alive: that her religion is merely external, such as attracts the observation of the world, whilst she is destitute of that faith, and those graces and virtues which constitute pure and undefiled religion before God.

Verse 2d.—Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

They are called upon to watch over themselves, to watch against temptation, especially against that snare into which too many fall, of being more desirous of being thought good than of actually being good. They are required to strengthen the good dispositions which remain in them, and which are in so feeble a state, that if not soon strengthened they must entirely die away. Though they had a high reputation among men, yet their works were

not acceptable in the sight of that God who looks into the heart, and judgeth righteous judgement.

Verse 3d.—Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come unto thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

They are exhorted to recollect the truths and precepts which they had received from the sacred scriptures, and had heard from the apostles and ministers of religion, to hold these fast and to repent of all their deviations from them. When any church becomes lukewarm, and more attentive to human forms and to the fashion of the times than to those things in religion which are essential and immutable, the best way to correct their errors is to bring them back to that sacred scripture which is the standard of Christianity. Christ assures this church, that if they do not watch, they shall as certainly be surprised at an unexpected time by his judgements, as that family are into whose house a thief breaks when they are fast asleep.

Verse 4th.—Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy.

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Though such was the general state of this church, he who perfectly knows the true character of every individual, declares that there are a few persons even in Sardis who are sincere and upright before God. They are called a few *names*, to intimate that Christ knows them perfectly, and, if necessary or proper, could have called every one of them by their name. These have not defiled their garments. As garments are intended to preserve the body from that debility and those diseases which excess of cold or heat occasions, and also to adorn it; the virtues of the Christian life are styled the garments of the soul, they are its best ornaments, and they preserve it from that debility and depravity which are the diseases of the soul, and the consequence of indolence and vice. Hence, in scripture, we are exhorted to be "*clothed* with humility." Job says, that he "*put on righteousness*, and it clothed him." And mention is made of the "ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit." These few regulated their hearts and their lives by the laws of the gospel, even in that church which regarded the good opinion of men more than the approbation of God; these few shall walk with Christ in white, because they are worthy. White garments signify the righteousness of saints, or true holiness, thus chap. xix. 8. it is said of the church of Christ in its purest state on earth, a period yet at a considerable distance, "And to her was
" that

“ granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen
“ clean and white ; for the fine linen is the right-
“ teousness of saints.” These few shall be admitted
into the heavenly state, whither Christ hath gone
before to prepare mansions for them in his Father’s
“ house. They shall ever be with the Lord,” and
their righteousness shall be without spot. They shall
be brought to the perfection of their natures, and
consequently, when placed in such a situation and
in such society, to the perfection of happiness. All
this is expressed by walking with Christ in white.

White raiment is used to signify in a peculiar
manner the righteousness of martyrs. Martyrs are
those witnesses for the truth as it is in Jesus, who will
suffer the loss of all things in this world, and even
of life itself, rather than they will abandon the
truth. Those of this character, most certainly will
be most attentive to the purity and holiness of their
hearts and lives. Chap. vi. 11. it is said of the mar-
tyrs under the altar, “ white robes were given
“ to every one of them.”

These few persons in Sardis are said to be wor-
thy of the white garments, that is, though they
were not put to death, they were in fact martyrs
for the truth. Nothing but the true spirit of mar-
tyrs can make a few persons adhere to the truth,
the purity and the simplicity of the gospel of Jesus,
in a degenerate church more anxious to please the
taste of the times, be that what it will, than to ap-
prove

prove herself to God. From such a church, and in such an age, a few such persons meet with as much persecution, though of a different kind, as others suffer from professed heathens. This kind of persecution requires fully as much uprightness and firmness of mind to support it as those do which heathens inflict by the torture, and at the stake.

Verse 5th, 6th.—He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

Whoever overcomes the trials and temptations to which he is exposed in such a time-serving and men-pleasing church, though treated by the other members of that church as ignorant, weak, and bigotted; in the heavenly state he shall be regarded by Christ as a friend of truth, and much wiser than those who derided his weakness. He shall receive the martyr's white clothing, though he was represented by them as an hypocrite. While they who had a name to live among the men of the world, and did all that they could to render his name contemptible, shall be found in a future state to be dead in trespasses and sins, he shall be found to be
spiritually

spiritually alive, and his name shall never be blotted out of the book of life.

The book of life is frequently mentioned in sacred scripture: it does not signify any particular book, but it signifies that all those who are spiritually alive are as perfectly known to God, and that they are as safe as they could be if their names were all recorded in a book kept for the purpose of registering, in the court of heaven, all those who are alive in Christ Jesus. It is as it were a record in the Divine mind of all those who are spiritually alive.

Though in such a church, whose fame is high with the men of the world, he may be considered by both as a disgrace to so respectable and polished a church and age; yet when Christ comes to judge the world in righteousness, he will confess him before his father and the holy angels; whilst he will deny them who never followed him, but who were the votaries of fame and fashion, having had a name to live while they were dead. He will confess him as his disciple and servant, place him on his right hand, and introduce him into the celestial mansions of perfect and endless purity, rectitude and bliss; saying, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." To every person who hears this epistle, and who in any age or country lives in a church of a character similar to that
here

here described, the spirit of God says the same things which are said in this epistle to those who were members of the church of Sardis.

Verse 7th, 8th.—And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth. I know thy works: Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

This epistle is addressed to the minister of the church in Philadelphia. This was a city of Lydia in Asia Minor under the jurisdiction of Sardis. It was never very large or populous.

The divine Author of this epistle designs himself, "him that is holy, that is true, and that openeth and no man shutteth." This character of Christ was particularly well adapted to the situation and character of this church. She is praised for her holiness. Who could perceive the beauty of holiness so well as he who is holy? Christ tells this church that he hath set before her an open door, and none can shut it. On whom can they

rely with such perfect confidence for the performance of this promise, as on him, who is not only true, and therefore cannot say what is false, but also who hath the key of David, and therefore can shut so as no man can open, and open so as no man can shut. Christ is perfectly holy both in his Divine and human nature. He is the holy one and the just. He is true: He cannot be deceived himself, and he can deceive no man.

The phrase, "The key of David which openeth, and no man shutteth" is taken from what is promised to Eliakim in Isaiah, xxii. 22. "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder, so he shall open, and no man shall shut, and he shall shut and none shall open." That power over Judah and Jerusalem, which was given to Eliakim when he was entrusted with the key of the house of David, is only a faint emblem of the power which Christ, the illustrious son of David, hath over his church, of which Judah and Jerusalem were typical. When he sets open a door to any particular church, by keeping open to them the instituted ordinances of religion, it is not in the power of men or devils to shut it, or to deprive them of these means of knowledge and grace.—When, in the course of his providence, he is pleased, for wise ends, to deprive any church of those means of instruction, none can restore them to it. He does as he will, in the armies of
heaven,

heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth, whatever seemeth good in his sight.

Christ tells this church that he knows her works. He also assures her that he hath set before her an open door ; and that the ordinances of religion shall be continued to her in spite of all diabolical and human opposition. He mentions the reason why he hath set an open door to this church, which none can shut. It was not because she had much worldly power and strength, by which she could repel her enemies, and, by the sword, defend her civil and religious privileges. In this respect she had only little strength. Philadelphia was a small city. But it was because she had kept the word of Christ, and had not denied his name. She had formed her faith, worship, discipline, and conduct upon the word of God contained in the sacred scriptures. She entertained right apprehensions of and suitable affections to the natures, character, and offices of Christ, and was never ashamed nor afraid to profess his name. She was not like too many ; who are fonder of any other standard than of the word of God ; and adhere to this or that name or leader, rather than to the name of Christ.

A religion, which is from God cannot be overthrown by men or devils. A religion, which is from God, must be found, in its purity, in those sacred writings which were dictated by the spirit

of God. The votaries of a religion, in which Christ is the Alpha and Omega, must ever pay the highest respect to the name of Jesus. Those, therefore, who keep the word of God, and do not deny the name of Christ, have every reason to trust that their church shall not be overthrown. Such a church is a work of God, therefore, as Gamaliel said, men cannot overthrow it. Such a church is built upon a rock, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Though others may err concerning the truth, nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure. But when any particular church treats the word of God with contempt or neglect, when it denies the name of Jesus, when it substitutes human institutions in the place of Divine laws, when it teaches for doctrines the commandments of men, and makes void the law of God by human traditions, when it becomes ashamed of the name of Christ, and enlists under the party name of some church, sect, or leader; it hath then no reason to expect that the promises made to the church of Christ will be accomplished to it. For, certainly, that is not the church of Christ which does not keep his word, and which denies his name.

Verse 9th.—Behold I will make them of the synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie); behold I will
make

make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

Jews, in the symbolical language, signify the true worshippers of God. When applied, as in this verse, to persons living under the Christian dispensation, they signify true Christians. Those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie, are the followers of Mahomet, who pretended to be a true prophet of God, but was only an impostor. Christ promises that the followers of Mahomet should pay them very high respect, and be obliged to acknowledge that Philadelphia is beloved of God.

Verse 10th.—Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation; which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

When this book was written the emperor Domitian was persecuting the Christian churches. Succeeding emperors raised up many persecutions, and thereby deprived many churches of the ordinances of religious worship. But, in this verse, Christ promises that he would keep this church from being deprived of the ordinances of religion, by those trials and persecutions, which should come upon

upon the whole habitable world, to try those who dwell upon the earth. This promise he makes to them, because they had learned to conduct themselves amid all the trials to which they were exposed, with the patience which his word inculcates.

Verse 11th.—Behold I come quickly : hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

Christ assures them, that, in some of these persecutions, he would come upon them suddenly, in the course of his providence. And he exhorts them to hold fast the word of God, and their attachment to the name of Jesus ; and then no man should take from them their crown. Most probably their crown is that high honour, which is promised them, that they alone, as a church, without interruption of the administration of the ordinances of religion, shall survive all those persecutions, by which so many churches were to be destroyed. It is also intimated, that they shall obtain and keep this crown, not by innovations in religion, but by holding fast that religion which they have already, and for which they are praised in verse 8th.

The promises made to this church in this and the three preceding verses, have been fulfilled to it, in a most striking manner, so as to discover the finger of God. Notwithstanding the small number of its inhabitants,

inhabitants, Philadelphia withstood, with great constancy and courage, the fury of the Turks, and was blessed with visible success. When all the rest of Asia had submitted to them, this town held out, and had in it a Christian church, in uninterrupted succession till after the year 1676. It is called by the Turks *Allah-Skeyr*, that is the city of God. Thus an open door hath been set to this church, and none hath been able to shut it. Thus the synagogue of Satan, or Mahometans have been made to worship at her feet, and to know that God hath loved her. See *Plin. Nat. Hist.* l. v. c. 29. *Strabo Geogr.* b. 12. *Smith de Statu Sept. Ecc.* *Spon's Voyage.* In the history of this church we may learn how it is that any Christian church shall best consult her own stability and honour, even by keeping the word of God, and not denying the name of Jesus.

Verses 12th, 13th.—Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

He

He who overcomes all the temptations, to which he is exposed in this world, shall be made a pillar in the temple of God in heaven. Every individual Christian in this world is stiled a temple of the living God, because he is consecrated to God ; God is worshipped in his heart, and the Spirit of God, by his gracious influences, dwelleth in him, 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. " Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you. " If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy : for the temple of God is holy " which temple you are."

In the heavenly state all the votaries shall be so pure and holy, and considered collectively shall be so much one, that the whole saints in heaven are stiled one great temple. This seems to be the meaning of Ephes. ii. 21. " In whom all the building fitly joined together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord." Hence, to be made a pillar in the temple of God, is to be a conspicuous and highly respectable member in the church of God in heaven. For, in temples and such public buildings, pillars are intended, at once to support and adorn the building. On pillars too, monumental inscriptions are written, to perpetuate the memory of illustrious persons and events.

On this pillar three inscriptions shall be written, 1st, The name of God. 2^d, The name of the city of God. And 3^d, Christ's new name. By the
name

name of God is meant an open acknowledgement that they are servants of God, as shall be shewn in the commentary on chap. xxi. 4. By the city of God is meant the millenium state of the church, as shall be shewn in the commentary on chap. xxi. By Christ's new name is meant the new name which is given to him, chap. xix. 16. "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

All these three inscriptions refer to the millenium state of the church as shall appear from the commentary on these passages. It is then that men shall serve God rather than man, and shall not be ashamed to profess themselves the servants and worshippers of God. It is then that the church of Christ shall appear in the greatest purity and magnificence. And it is then, that all the Kings and Lords of the world shall bow to the sceptre of Jesus, that he shall appear in a character new and different from that which he and his religion have hitherto exhibited in the world. He, whose religion was every where spoken against, and who himself appeared in the form of a slave, and suffered like one, shall then establish his religion over the whole world, and by the triumph of his kingdom of truth, righteousness, peace and joy, over all the kingdoms of the world, shall in fact prove himself to be the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and shall then assume this new name.

It is thus declared, that, for ever in heaven, such persons shall be honoured as illustrious instruments in the hand of God, by which the millenium state of the church hath been brought about. If none had overcome the various temptations and trials to which they have been exposed in past times; if none overcome the trials they meet with in the present times, and if none shall overcome the trials to which they shall be exposed between this day and the time predicted for the commencement of the millenium state;—that state could never commence. If none in the past or present times had feared God more than man; obeyed God rather than man; practised religion in its scriptural purity; or experienced the kingly power of Christ in rendering them a willing people to himself, and in making them conquerors, and more than conquerors over all their enemies;—the millenium state would never arrive. As the men of this character in every age and country between the date of this book, and the commencement of the millenium state, are exposed to much greater trials, that the men who shall live in that state shall be; as, on account of the great difference of situations, much more praise is due to them, than even to the members of the church in the millennium state, if in both cases the whole praise is not due to the grace of God; and as they are the voluntary instruments in the hand of God for bringing
about

about that state ;—they shall, on that account, be highly distinguished for ever in heaven, as pillars which support and adorn the church of Christ. They shall be known with honour by all the redeemed in the heavenly state, as the excellent ones of the earth, to whom under God, the church of Christ and the world were indebted for the millenium state. Let every one who hears this epistle, attend to it, and remember, that what the Spirit saith to the church of Philadelphia, he saith to all who are in similar situations and of similar characters.

Verses 14th, 15th.—And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God, I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would that thou wert cold or hot.

This epistle is addressed to the minister of the church of the Laodiceans. Laodicea was a very considerable city of Caria in Asia Minor ; and had several cities under its jurisdiction. It was a place of great riches, partly from the kindness of its citizens, who, by their wills, had left great wealth to it ; and partly on account of the sale of its wool, which was in great request in other places, on account of its colour and softness.

In this epistle, Christ designs himself the *Amen*, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God. *Amen* is a Hebrew word, which signifies *true* or *certain*. It is commonly used at the end of prayers, and there it signifies, *so it is*, and *so let it be*.

In Chap. i. 8. Christ styles himself Alpha and Omega, and then explains what we are to understand by that designation, even the beginning and the ending. In like manner, when he styles himself the *Amen*, he explains, that, by *Amen* we are to understand, the true and faithful witness, and the beginning of the creation of God. Whatever he says is truth, and shall be verified. If he promises any thing, his promise is not only made in truth, but it shall also be faithfully performed. If, with respect to creation, he says but the word, creatures arise into existence. He at first gave beginning to the creation of God. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.—All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." This character of Christ is very suitable to the state of this church, and the strain of the epistle addressed to her.—The lukewarm are not easily roused to a sense of their sin and danger; what therefore can be so fit to rouse them as a description of their sin and a threatening of their danger, by him who is the *Amen*: All
whose

whose words are true, all whose threatenings shall be accomplished ; and who having created, is able to destroy.

This church is reproved for her lukewarmness and indifference in matters of religion. Whilst she professed to believe, at least, whilst she did not actually disbelieve the truths of religion she treated the most important doctrines, and duties with the utmost indifference.

Verse 16th.—So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Because of her lukewarmness, Christ declares that he will reject this church with disgust and abhorrence. This threatening was inflicted on her. In the tenth year of Nero, this city was destroyed by an earthquake, and though it was rebuilt afterwards, it is long ago destroyed, is a heap of ruins, and inhabited by wild beasts only. (See *Plin. Nat. His. l. 5, c. 29. Tacit. Ann. l. 14. c. 27.*)

Verses 17th, 18th.—Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing ; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked, I counsel thee to buy of

me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see.

Here Christ assigns another reason, why he will reject this church with abhorrence; because she is elated by her worldly riches, and says she has need of nothing; whilst she is ignorant of, or inattentive to her wretched contemptible and miserable state, on account of her ignorance of the great truths of religion, and her want of those virtues of the christian life, which are the best clothing and ornament of the soul. In this situation, he advises her to apply to him for all those spiritual riches which she so much needs; even that knowledge, and those virtues which are so much adapted to her wants.

Verse 19th.—As many as I love; I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore and repent.

Christ, like a wise parent; often shews his love to his children by not sparing the rod. He rebukes and chastens those whom he loves, when they transgress. He therefore assures her, that if she would wish his rebukes may terminate in her

her amendment, and not in her destruction, she ought to repent of her lukewarmness, and cultivate that zeal for the important and interesting truths and duties of religion, which accords to their own value, and the deep concern which she hath in them. True zeal is always according to knowledge, and equally distant from indifference and enthusiasm.

Verse 20th.—Behold, I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

However the church of Laodicea may despise, Christ's exhortation, and therefore may soon be despised and rejected by him with disgust, every individual, who shall open the door of his heart and give him admittance, shall enjoy communion with him. He shall find Christ to be his God, his Saviour, and his portion; if he is heartily willing to become one of his people, and to accept of him as his chief good.

Verses 21st, 22d.—To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath
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an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

To every one, who resisteth, and finally overcometh the various trials and temptations to which he is exposed in this world ; Christ will grant to sit with him, at last, in his throne ; as certainly as Christ himself, after having overcome all the temptations and sufferings to which he had been exposed in this world, hath sat down with his Father in his throne.

Christ is said, in his mediatorial character, to have sat down with his Father in his throne ; because he is exalted, even in that person, in which the divine and human nature are united, to a dignity far superior to the rank or right of all created beings ; to a power suited to the supremacy of Deity, even to the adoration of men and angels, and to the right of judging the world. To this dignity he was raised in his mediatorial character, on account of his having overcome all the temptations and sufferings to which he was exposed in the flesh. Heb. xii. 2. In like manner, those who overcome are said to sit down with Christ in his throne ; because, in a future state, they shall be raised to that perfection of human nature, which hath been exemplified and is possessed by Christ. This is a state superior even to the original state of man. In his
original

original state, man was upright ; but he was fallible and actually did fall. But though Christ was exposed to much greater trials in his human nature, than those to which Adam was exposed, he overcame them and still preserved his uprightness. In like manner, those who overcome shall be raised to unfinning and infallible perfection. In them human nature shall nearly resemble the perfect human nature in Christ. They shall be purified for heaven, in a manner far surpassing the original state of man, in which he was fit for a terrestrial paradise, but clothed in flesh and blood, in such a state, as could not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Angels shall minister unto them, and they shall judge angels, Rom. viii. 12. John x. 28. 1 Cor. xv. 47,—58. Heb. i. 14. 1 Cor. vi. 3. What stronger motive to zeal for the service of Christ can be devised, than the promise from him of being seated with him in his throne. What Christ hath said to this church and to the individual members of it, he saith to all who, in any age or country, shall hear this epistle.

C H A P. IV.

VISION I.

Verse 1st. **A**FTER this I looked, and behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

This is the second vision which John saw; and it relates to the second part of his commission. In chap. i. xix. he was commanded to write, first, the things which are; and then, the things *which shall be hereafter*. In the second and third chapters, he wrote the things which then were, in the history of the seven Asiatic churches. And now he proceeds to write the things which shall follow these in regular succession, with the hieroglyphical visions, which he saw; and by which these future events are represented

After this, or rather (*μετα ταυτα* in the original) After these things; after he had seen and heard the things contained in the first vision, and narrated

ted in the three preceding chapters, he looked and behold a door was opened in heaven. When he beheld a door opened in heaven, he at the same time heard the first voice, as the voice of a trumpet talking with him, which he had heard as in chap. i. 10. The voice said, "come up hither, and I will shew thee the things which must be (*μετα ταυτα*) after these things."

By the door opened in heaven, and the invitation to John to come up hither, it is intimated that the scene of this vision was in heaven. He was, not corporally, but in spirit caught up into the third heaven. The voice which spake to him was that of Christ; for from the original it is evident that it was the first voice that spake to him, but that was shewn to be the voice of Christ, chap. i. 10. The design of this vision was to shew John the things, which most certainly would follow in regular succession; those things which he had already seen and represented. For this is the meaning of the words in the original, *α δεῖ γινῆσθαι μετα ταυτα*.

Verses 2d, 3d.—And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne, and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper, and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

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Immediately

Immediately on hearing this voice, John felt his mind in that state in which the mind of man is, when it is under the immediate influence of divine inspiration. "He was in the Spirit." For the full explanation of this phrase, see the commentary on chap. i. 10. In this state of mind, the same impressions were made upon his mind by the Spirit of God, without the intervention of material objects and organs, as would have been made upon it in a natural way, if he had seen the following visions with his bodily eyes.

"A throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon it," signifies, that the events themselves which shall take place from the days of John to the consummation of all things, as well as the predictions of them, proceed from that God, whose throne is in the heavens, whose footstool is the earth, and whose kingdom ruleth over all: That all the revolutions and kingdoms are overruled by that God, who makes the wrath of man to praise him, and restraineth the remainder of his wrath.

The vision does not give any representation of him who sat upon the throne; because God is a pure spirit, and therefore cannot be represented by any material object, Isaiah xl. 18. "To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him."

It is said, that he who sat upon the throne, was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone. From
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the mode of expression, it is evident, that it is the colour of these stones to which the reference is made. The jasper is a stone of a white and bright shining colour, and the sardine of a red colour. The white and bright colour is the symbol of good will and favour; and the red of anger and displeasure. Hence they signify that the events predicted in this book, shall be expressive of the good will and favour of God to his church, and of his displeasure against his enemies. That they are so in fact, shall appear in the sequel of this book. God fixed upon the rainbow, Gen. ix. 8,—17. as the symbol of his covenant with Noah and all flesh, that he would never more destroy the world by a flood. Hence the rainbow round the throne signifies, that however thick the clouds shall be which shall hang over the church of Christ, and however great the floods of error shall be which the devil and wicked men shall pour out in order to drown her, as shall appear as we proceed in this book; God shall never forget his covenant with her; and therefore she shall never be drowned by these floods. Built on Christ, the rock of ages, the gates of hell shall not prevail against her. This rainbow is in sight like an emerald. The colour of the emerald is green. By mentioning the green colour of this rainbow, it is declared, that the cloud which is to hang over the church is to be very thick and black, for the thicker and blacker the cloud is, the

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more does the green colour predominate over the other colours of the rainbow. Green, too, is the colour which it is most pleasant for the eye to behold, and the one which strengthens it most. In like manner, the covenant of God shall be contemplated with delight by the church of Christ, under all her clouds; and the contemplation of it shall strengthen her faith, hope, and patience, the eyes of the soul in this state in which Christians live by faith, and not by sight; in which hope, in many things, supplies the place of enjoyment.

Verse 4th.—And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

(Πρεσβυτεροι Presbyters), or as it is translated, elders, is a symbol borrowed from the elders who were the representatives of the people of Israel, the people of God; and from the elders which were ordained in every church, as the representatives of the Christians in that church. The number twenty-four is taken from twelve, the number of the elders of Israel, added to that of the apostles of Christ. Hence the twenty-four elders round about the throne on twenty-four seats, signify the members of the church of Christ in this world, consisting of every
true

true worshipper of God, whether he is Jew or Gentile.

These elders are clothed in white, and have on their heads crowns of gold. By being clothed in white garments, it is intimated, that, during a considerable period of the history predicted in this book, and particularly the first part of it, the true worshippers of God shall be persecuted; and, under all their persecutions, shall preserve their purity in faith and obedience, "for white raiment is "the righteousness of saints," chap. xix. 8. "White robes were given to the martyrs," chap. vi. 11.

By having golden crowns on their heads, it is predicted, that, in the latter part of that period, the church of Christ shall be triumphant, and shall reign in purity, peace, and honour for a thousand years on earth: which shall appear on the commentary on chap. xx.

The twenty four elders are placed around the throne, because the true worshippers of God receive their laws from God, obey God rather than man; and because not one of them in any country or age shall escape the notice, or not enjoy the protection of God. And also, because the revelations in this book which proceed from the throne of God, have a particular respect to all the servants of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, and to that glorious state of the church when they shall both be united. That state, when the Jews, rightly understanding

derstanding and believing Moses, shall believe in Jesus of whom Moses testified, when God shall bring in his antient people the Jews with the fullness of the Gentiles, and when the Jews, seeing Christ and his kingdom triumphant over the Roman empire and all the kingdoms of the earth, shall heartily embrace him, not as a temporal but as a spiritual king, whose kingdom is not of this world.

Verse 5th.—And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings, and voices : and there were seven lamps of fire, burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God.

Thunderings and lightnings proceeding out of the throne, signify, that this book shall fortell many awful judgements, which shall come upon the world ; and, that who or whatever shall be the immediate instruments of inflicting these, they shall all happen in the time and manner fixed by God the supreme Governor of the world. And the voices signify, that the intention of these is to give necessary and seasonable warning and directions to the church of Christ, and to the world at large. That both shall be done shall appear as we proceed. We are told that the seven lamps of fire, burning on the front of the throne, signify the seven spirits of God ; that is the Holy Spirit of God, as
hath

bath been shewn at considerable length in the commentary on chap. i. 4.

The symbol of seven lamps of fire burning, signifies the illuminating and purifying influences of the Holy Spirit. For the lamp gives light, and fire purifies by melting away the dross. These influences shall extend to, and are sufficient for all, the seven ages of the world.

Verse 6th.—And before the throne there was a sea of glass, like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

In the same situation with the seven lamps, even on the front of the throne, was a sea of glass, like unto crystal. This symbol is taken from the molten sea, a large vessel of thirty cubits in circumference, and five in depth; placed in the temple at Jerusalem, and filled with pure water. The sacrifices which were to be offered as burnt offerings, were washed in water drawn from this sea into ten lavers on the side of it; and the priests, before offering them, were to wash themselves in the molten sea, 1 Kings vii. 23,—39. 2 Chron. iv. 6. The design therefore of the molten sea was to purify the sacrifice, and the priest who offered it. It was a symbolical repre-

sentation of the purifying influences of the blood of Christ, without which neither the sacrifice nor the priest could have been of any avail to the purifying of the conscience, or averting the wrath of God. Hence, the sea of glass signifies Christ, by whose blood every Christian is purified. Christians are filed priests unto God in this book, and other parts of sacred scripture. Christ is the sea in which these priests must wash, before they can offer unto God, in an acceptable manner, the sacrifice of prayer and praise. This sea of glass is mentioned again in chap. xv. 2. in which passage it is evident, and shall appear in the commentary, that it signifies Christ as the mediator between God and man.

This sea of glass, like the spirit of God, is on the front of the throne. By this situation, it is signified, that Christ is a divine person as well as the Holy Spirit, and that he proceeds from the Father. The word in the original, which in both cases is translated "before the throne" is *ἐναντίον*, which signifies the face or countenance. The pure Deity is invisible by the bodily eye of man, and his counsels cannot be discovered by any created being. But the Holy Spirit reveals so many of his counsels as are fit for us to know, and the Son of God in the flesh displayed in a visible manner many of the natural and moral perfections of God. Thus they have, as it were, made his face visible to men, 1 Cor. ii. 9,—16. John i. 14, and 18.

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In the space between the throne, and that circle around it, in which the twenty-four elders sat on twenty-four seats, John saw four beasts, full of eyes before and behind. The faces of these beasts looked to the throne, and their backs to the elders.

Our translation throws great obscurity over this passage, by translating the Greek word ζῶα, beasts. It signifies *living creatures*. It is entirely different and distinct from θηρίον, which is rightly translated *beast*, chap. xi. 7. where it is said, "the beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit". θηρίον signifies a ravenous beast of prey. What it signifies in the symbolical language, shall be shewn in the commentary on that verse, and how exactly that signification corresponds to the original one of a beast of prey. The beasts (living creatures) spoken of in this verse, are mentioned no less than nineteen times in the following passages of this book, ch. iv. 6, 7, 9. ch. v. 6, 8, 11, 14. ch. vi. 1, 3, 5, 7. ch. vii. 11. ch. xiv. 3. ch. xv. 7. and ch. xix. 4. and in every one of them the word ζῶα is used. Mention is made of the beast, (the beast of prey) which is mentioned in chap. xi. 7. no less than eleven times in the following passages of this book, chap. xi. 7. chap. xiii. 1, 11. chap. xv. 2. chap. xvi. 13. chap. xvii. 8, 11, 12, 13. chap. xix. 19. and chap. xx. 10. in every one of which the word θηρίον is used. The distinction between these words in the original is perfectly evident to every person acquainted

quainted with the Greek language. The same distinction ought to be preserved in every translation of them. We cannot suppose, that the unerring Spirit of God had not a sufficient reason for preserving the distinction between them, as we see he hath done in every passage, without a single exception, in which they are used in this book, though they are used in it no fewer than thirty times.

These four *living creatures*, for this term I shall henceforth use instead of the four beasts, are symbols of the gospel ministry in four successive periods, distinctly marked by the beautiful hieroglyphic of these four living creatures, which is drawn in the following verse. By the gospel ministry is not meant the individuals who in these periods bear the name of ministers of the gospel; but the collective body, which is made up of all those particular ministers of the gospel whom Christ knows to be his servants, and will undoubtedly approve of at last as such. Such ministers of the gospel, are with great propriety denominated "living creatures," because they are spiritually alive; and their office, as instruments in the hand of God, is to excite and strengthen the spiritual life in Christians.

That these four living creatures signify the gospel ministry, is evident from the station in which they are placed, and the part which they are represented as acting in this vision. They stand in
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the space between the throne, and the circle around it on which the four and twenty elders sat. They are placed as it were between God, as manifested by the mediation of Christ and the agency of the Holy Spirit, and the Christian worshippers. With their faces towards the throne, on the front of which are the seven lamps and the sea of glass, and with their backs to the elders; they conduct Christians to that glorious place in which they shall ever be with the Lord, and shall be blessed with seeing God; they say unto them, "Be ye followers of us, even as we are also of Christ." They lead and conduct the worship of the elders, that is, of the Christian church, verses 8,—11. chap. v. 8,—10.

In chap. v. 11. angels, the living creatures and the elders are all mentioned distinctly from one another. Sometimes these three distinct bodies join in one song of praise to God; and whenever they do so, there is not one word of redemption in the song, as appropriated to them; because angels could not sing that Christ hath redeemed them. "For verily Christ took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." At other times, the four living creatures with the elders only, join in songs of praise to God; and then in every one of these songs they sing redeeming love, or some peculiar blessing of the gospel of Jesus; because all the parties which join in these songs are equally interested in the theme of redemption. Thus chap.

chap. v. 8,—10. The four living creatures and the elders sing unto Jesus a song most suitable for the ministers and Christians of the church of Christ, but a song in which no angel could join them; for they sang to the Lamb that was slain: "For thou wast slain, and hast *redeemed us* to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people; and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

In the two following verses, angels join with the living creatures and elders; and though the Lamb that was slain is the object of their adoration and praise, yet redemption is no part of the subject of it. Christ, because God the Creator of all things visible and invisible, is the object of worship to the highest angels. God "when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, saith, and let all the angels of God worship him". In their song they never mention redeeming love; they sing "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory and blessing."

In chap. vii. 11, 12. The angels, the elders, and the four living creatures again join in one song, and there is not one word of the peculiarities of the gospel in it.—And in chap. xix. 1,—4. the elders and the four living creatures, without the angels, join in a song which is full of the peculiarities of the
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the gospel.—The reader is desired to consult with attention the many passages of this book referred to in the commentary on this verse.

These living creatures are full of eyes before, to look to God, to receive instruction, direction and support from him. They learn the whole counsel of God from the sacred oracles of truth and the illuminations of the Holy Spirit. They set the Lord ever before them, and therefore they shall not be moved. They are full of eyes behind, to inspect their flocks, and to look well to the church of Christ, over which they are overseers.

Verse 7th.—And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

In this beautiful hieroglyphic, the character of the gospel ministers during four successive periods from the days of the apostles to the final judgment is drawn in features the most just and striking.

The first living creature “was like a lion.” A lion, the boldest and most courageous of animals, is the symbol of boldness and courage. Hence this symbol signifies that boldness and courage were to be the most striking feature of the character of the gospel ministry during the first period. Accordingly,

dingly, the most undaunted courage, in fact, marked the character of the apostles and first teachers of Christianity, for the first century of the Christian church.

The second was like a calf, or young ox. The ox, who of all animals bears the yoke with the greatest patience and perseverance, is the symbol of patience under labour and suffering. In this symbol the ox is young, (a calf), to shew that the character of patience under suffering should mark the gospel ministry at an early period; and that these sufferings, and that patience under them should continue long. For a young ox, in the ordinary course of things, will live longer than an old one. The period in which patience under labour and suffering was the character of the gospel ministry, commenced about the beginning of the second century, and continued to the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Every person acquainted with the history of the church, must see how much the gospel ministry was marked by patience under sufferings, during the long space of fourteen hundred years.

The third "had a face as a man." Man is an intelligent and rational creature; and, by the degree of his intellectual and rational powers honourably distinguished from the other inhabitants of this earth. "God teacheth us more than the beasts of the earth, and maketh us wiser than the fowls of heaven."

ven. In these respects he far excells the lion, the calf, and the eagle ; Hence the face of a man is the symbol of knowledge and reasoning. This third period of the gospel ministry was to be distinguished for knowledge and reasoning. This period commenced at the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, and shall run down to the two thousandth year of Christ ; at which time a glorious period of purity, peace, prosperity and triumph to the church of Christ shall commence, as shall be shewn in the commentary on chap. xx. 1,—7. We live near the middle of this period.

Hath not the gospel ministry, in fact, been marked and distinguished in this period by knowledge and reasoning. Since its commencement all the tribe of acute deistical writers have arisen ; let any man read with candour and attention the many able answers which have been made to them by the friends of revelation, let him read the different books which have been written in different parts of the world on the subject of theology, and deny, if he can, that knowledge and reasoning are the striking features in the character of the gospel ministry in this period.

That the gospel ministry shall still more be distinguished for knowledge and reasoning during the two hundred years of this period, which are yet to come, is highly probable from this hieroglyphic, and from what hath already happened to verify

this interpretation of it for the two hundred years that are past.

“ The fourth was like a flying eagle.” Of all fowls, the eagle is most distinguished for the acuteness and strength of its sight, the height of its flight, and the length of its life. Hence an eagle is the symbol of clear and quick preception, elevated affections, and longevity. These are the three qualities which shall form the character of the gospel ministry in the fourth period. This period shall commence in the year of Christ 2000, when the millennium foretold in ch. xx. shall begin. The time and nature of which shall be explained and established in the commentary on that chapter, on principles quite different from the dreams of enthusiasm. This period shall run down to the end of the world, in one sense, shall run unto, and continue for ever in the heavenly state. Then a kind of intuitive knowledge, as a higher kind of it, shall succeed and supersede the reasoning of the preceding period. The affections of the ministers of the gospel shall then be placed on every object in the proportion of its own worth, and the nearness of the relation in which it stands to them; and consequently chiefly on truth, on virtue, on Christ, on God; and in one word, on the things which are above. This shall be a long period. It shall continue to the end of the world, nay, it shall mark the character of the church of Christ ~~ever~~ ever in heaven. Then Christians shall see no more darkly

darkly as through a glass, but as it were face to face. Then they shall not know as now by parts, step by step, as they discover truth in the reasoning way ; but even as also they are known, at one glance in the intuitive way. Then those things which are in part shall be done away, and those things which are perfect shall come. Then their esteem and love shall be placed properly on every object, and supremely on God.

Let us here pause a little, to contemplate and adore that divine wisdom and goodness, which hath given these characters to the gospel ministry ; and that knowledge, which hath so exactly predicted them so many hundred years ago. With what wisdom and goodness is every one of these characters adapted to the real state of the world, and of the church of Christ, in the period to which it was appropriated.

In the first period when the Roman empire ruled the world, an empire, at that time, highly distinguished for its courage, and by its courage carrying its dominion to the greatest extent ; an empire which respected courage above every other virtue so much, that in the Latin language of that period, the word (*virtus*) which we translate virtue, signified military courage ; what character of the gospel could so much catch the attention, command the respect, and obtain the reception of such a people, as that of courage and bold-

ness? Or what character could be more fit to give the infant Christian church a footing in the world?

In the second period, in which learning, liberty, and religion were buried deep under the rubbish of the uncultivated manners of barbarous nations, and of the gross superstitions and painful penances of the dark ages; what character of the gospel ministry could be so suitable to such times, as patience under suffering; or what so necessary to preserve a seed to serve God, as such patience under so long and cruel persecutions? To have reasoned with men in these dark ages, as the gospel ministry hath done in this third period, would have served no good purpose whatever, because they could not have understood their reasonings. To have discovered the same forwardness and courage which marked the ministry of the first period, would have drawn total destruction upon them, from men of such barbarous ignorance and manners. In a period, in which the gross ignorance, superstition and enthusiasm of the times made the votaries of the church of Rome submit to the most painful voluntary sufferings and penances; and in which the patient endurance of these was extolled as one of the highest virtues of religion; patience in the gospel ministry under their involuntary sufferings, had a natural tendency to attract the notice, and even to command the respect of men of such habits. And accordingly it did so, insomuch that
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the patient sufferings of many of the martyrs, was the means of converting their persecutors. Hence, that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, hath been proverbial for a long time.

In the third period, in which, at the glorious æra of the Reformation, learning, liberty, and religion rose together from that rubbish under which they had lain long deep buried; and have ever since become stronger and stronger together, and are daily extending their range; how fit is the character of knowledge and reasoning in the gospel ministry! In an enlightened age men will not embrace religion, on account of either the boldness or patience of its teachers. They must be shewn the truth, excellency, and utility of its doctrines, and the strength of its evidence, by its teachers, before they will embrace that religion, which like all true religion calls upon men "to prove all things, and "to hold fast only that which is good," and to give a reason of the faith and hope that is in them. In an enlightened age too, there will be less occasion for patience; because in proportion as learning and liberty increase, persecution for conscience sake shall decrease. New improvements in learning, liberty, and religion, in their influence on human character, are similar to new improvements of every kind. At first, they lead many of the first adventurers into dangerous errors, by which the very ends they pursue are defeated. When first rising
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from ignorance, men embrace scholastic and childish distinctions for true learning ; when breaking the yoke of slavery, they mistake licentiousness for liberty ; and when shaking off the fetters of superstition, they embrace scepticism for philosophy ; and an impious kind of deism for that Christianity, which, “ by honouring the Son, honoureth the Father also ; ”—how very fit to such a state of the world and of religion are reason and knowledge in the gospel ministry, in order to combat, answer, and remove such errors so inimical to learning, liberty, and religion? •

In the fourth period, in which “ all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God, and of his Christ ; ” in which the gospel of Jesus shall appear in this world in a state of purity, peace, and triumph, far surpassing those of any state in which it hath yet appeared ; what character of the gospel ministry can be so suitable to such a period, as clear and instantaneous perceptions and elevated affections? When all shall know God from the highest to the lowest ; when the law of God shall be written upon their hearts, and God shall be their God, and they shall be his people ; there will be little occasion for reasoning. The truth shall then need only to be stated, in order to be understood and believed. When the affections of men shall be so well regulated, what can be more fit in those who lead their devotions, than

than to raise their affections to God and the things which are above? That spirituality, elevation and ardour of affection, which in the present age, would be looked upon by many as enthusiasm, would fall quite short of that refinement and elevation of affection which is suited to that period, in which the kingdom of God, which is not meats and drinks, but truths and righteousness and peace and joy shall come.

This description of the gospel ministry, was drawn by John in the year of Christ ninety-five; it is now the year 1790; and the fact for near seventeen hundred years hath exactly corresponded to that description. Such an exact correspondence between the predictions and the events, in so many different periods, for so long a course of time, and in circumstances, which could not possibly have been planned, foreseen, nor brought about by any created being, at once prove the inspiration of this book, God's perfect fore-knowledge of future events, even the most contingent, in the strictest consistency with the liberty of man as a moral agent, the superintendency of divine providence, God's moral government of the world, and his particular care of the church of Christ.

Verse 8th.—And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full

full of eyes within, and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

Every one of these living creatures had six wings, like the seraphim mentioned in Isaiah vi. 2. 3. "Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." As in the seraphim, these six wings served two purposes, first to cover their faces and their feet, that is to express their reverence and humility before God, and second to fly, that is to express their readiness and expedition in obeying the commands of God; they here signify that reverence and humility in the sight of God, and that readiness and expedition in the execution of the Divine will, which mark the character of the ministers of the gospel.

They are full of eyes within. In verse 6. they are represented as full of eyes before, to perceive the commands of God, and behind, to inspect their flocks; and here within, in order to look to themselves. They do not satisfy themselves with the speculative knowledge of religion, whilst they have not felt its power. They do not conduct the worship

ship of their congregations, merely because it is their office to do so ; but they speak because they believe. As exhorted in 1 Tim. iv. 16. " They " take heed to themselves and to their doctrine ; " they continue in them, that in doing this they " may save themselves, and them that hear " them."

" And they rest not day and night." The words *rest not* are a wrong translation of the original *καὶ ἀδρανῶν οὐκ ἔχουσιν*. In our translation they imply some degree of weariness or pain ; for to one or most commonly to both of these is rest opposed. But, in the Greek language, they are opposed to mere cessation ; which cessation, instead of implying rest from labour, toil, weariness or pain, might as well signify (as it does here) the interruption of such active employments as are consistent with and even productive of real joys. The meaning of them would have been better expressed thus : " They stop not," or, " they intermit not." That is, they are continually employed and delighted in adoring and praising the moral and natural perfections of God. His moral perfections are all comprehended under his superlative holiness, and his natural perfections under his self-existence, omnipotence and eternity. Their adorations are directed first to his moral perfections, because natural perfections, though they might fill their minds with awe and even dread, are rendered truly amiable.

and adorable only when they are under the direction of those which are moral ; and also because, to those who are living creatures, who are spiritually alive, the perfect holiness of God is the most adorable of all perfections.

By their not intermitting day nor night, it is not meant, that they are actually employed every moment either in private and secret devotions, or in conducting the public devotions of the church : Of none of these are they negligent ; but only that, even when they are not actually engaged in these, their minds are habitually impressed with suitable sentiments of the greatness, the goodness and the holiness of God. This is to have the fear of the Lord ever before their eyes ; to wait on God all the day, to pray without ceasing, and to rejoice evermore.

Verses 9th, 10th, 11th.—And when these beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory, and honour, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

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The four living creatures, the ministers of the gospel, are represented as conducting the worship of the Christian church, typified by the twenty four elders. The whole church, consisting of ministers and people, join in worshipping God only, and in adoring and praising him as the Creator and Preserver of all, and the Author of every blessing and honour, temporal and spiritual, which they possess. They therefore ascribe to him all the glory, honour, and power, of every great and good thing which they have either perceived or enjoyed.

C H A P. V.

Verse 1st. **A**ND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within, and on the back side, sealed with seven seals.

This book was in the form of the antient rolls. Though the rolls were frequently, like this book, written within and on the back side; yet, as they were rolled round a piece of timber and sealed at the end, though detached words were seen, as several words could not be seen in their regular order, it was impossible to perceive the meaning of a single sentence, while the roll was wrapped round the piece of timber and sealed at the end. Let any person wrap a roll of paper round a piece of timber, in the way in which these antient rolls were wrapped, and he shall find it impossible for him to read a single sentence of it, though written on the back side as well as within. In Ezek. ii. 9. 10. a roll of a book is said to be written within and without.

The hieroglyphic in this verse is a very singular and uncommon one. A book received from God is the symbol of a revelation from God committed to writing.

writing, Jer. xxxvi. 2. Ezek. ii. 9. But as this book is still in the hand of God, and sealed with seven seals, its contents are known to none but God.

The book too is written within and on the back side, that is, it is entirely filled up. No new revelation is to be added to it. This looks like a paradoxical hieroglyphic, a complete revelation committed to writing, to which nothing is to be added; and yet known to God only. This book is sealed with seven seals. Probably these seals were not all fixed at the end of the roll; but every one of them at a different part of it, in the following manner: So much of the roll was wrapped round the piece of timber, and then a seal was placed upon it; so much more, and then a second seal; so much more, and then a third seal; and so on until all the seven seals were placed upon it at proper distances; and the seventh seal was placed upon and closed up the end of the roll.

When the seal, which is at the end of the roll, which, in the opening is called the first seal, is opened, and so much of the roll is unwrapped as is contained between that one and the second seal, the contents of that first part of the roll may be seen and read. In like manner, the second is opened, and so on to the seventh.

This book is said to be sealed with seven seals, because it is divided into seven distinct predictions, as shall appear in the opening of these seven seals.

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This number has also a reference to the seven ages, into which the greatest part of the duration of the world is divided, as shall afterwards appear when I consider these ages. Seven, too, the symbol of perfection, signifies that this book was so perfectly sealed up, before the days of the apostle John, that no creature could open it, and look into its contents.

But what is the particular book which exactly corresponds to all the parts of this paradoxical hieroglyphic? It is the book of the prophecies of Daniel so far as it relates to the Roman empire, under its heathen and papal heads, and to the church of Christ; particularly chap. vii. 7.—28. and chap. xii. In these passages are contained all the predictions, which are more fully illustrated in the whole book of the Revelation, from the beginning of chap. vi. to the end of the book, as shall appear as we proceed in the commentary. Hence as nothing is added to it, in this last written revelation of God's will, it agrees to the first character of the book in this verse, that it is written within and on the back side.

It is also a book, for it was a written revelation from God in the days of Daniel, many hundred years, before John saw this vision. But though it was a revelation from God committed to writing; yet it was in the days of John still a sealed book in the hand of God. Neither Daniel himself nor a-

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ny other man or creature knew its meaning. Daniel not only tells us that he knew not the meaning of the things which he saw and wrote in his book, but that by the divine command they were sealed up, and were to continue so until the time of the gospel dispensation. He thus expresses himself, chap. xii. 8, 9. "And I heard but understood not: then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things? And he said, go thy way Daniel: for the words are closed up and *sealed* till the time of the end. The time of the end, which is frequently mentioned in sacred writing, signifies the same thing with those expressions, which also frequently occur in sacred scripture, *the last times*, and *the fullness of times*. All these signify the time of the gospel dispensation, which commenced with the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and ends with the consummation of all things, or Christ's delivering up the mediatorial kingdom unto God the Father. This period is styled the last times, the fulness of times, and the time of the end, because, though there were several times or dispensations of religion, before it, such as first that of Adam in paradise, second the patriarchal dispensation, and third the Mosaic dispensation; there shall be no dispensation of revealed religion, in this world, after it. This dispensation is the time of the end.

This book is in the right hand of him who sat on the throne. The right hand is the symbol of wisdom

dom, dexterity, and power. By this symbol it is declared that all the things predicted in this book are dictated by the unerring wisdom, and, in spite of all opposition, shall be exactly accomplished by the almighty power of God. In fact, these parts of the prophecy of Daniel remained sealed up, until the time of the gospel dispensation, when the book of the Revelation was written by John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, in order to open up the sealed book of Daniel.

Verse 2d.—And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

An angel signifies a messenger of God to men, whether that messenger is one of the celestial spirits, one of the sons of men, or a particular event in the course of his providence.

The angel mentioned here, appears to me, to have been the prophet Daniel. He was so frequently employed as a messenger of God to men, that he might well have been stiled an angel. He anxiously desired to know the meaning of these sealed visions, chap. xii. 8, 9. He says "And I heard, but I understood not; then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And he said, go thy way Daniel; for the words
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"are closed up, and sealed till the time of the end."

Daniel is stiled a strong or powerful angel, because he was great and powerful at the court of the kings of Babylon, because he was powerful as an angel or messenger of God, having, in his prophecies published to men many great and interesting events. The appellation of *strong* is emphatically given to him, Daniel x. 9. "And said, O man greatly beloved, fear not, peace be unto thee, be *strong*, yea be *strong*. And when he had spoken to me I was strengthened, and said, Let my Lord speak for thou hast strengthened me." He is stiled a strong angel here, especially with respect to the loudness of the voice, with which he made this proclamation. A loud voice is expressive of the strength and earnestness of him who speaks, tends to rouse the attention of the hearers and can be heard by many of them and at a great distance. Accordingly these prophecies of Daniel, were what he desired earnestly to know, they roused the attention of mankind; and though published many hundred years before the days of John, yet during all that time, no man was able to unfold their true meaning.

Verses 3d, 4th.—And no man in heaven, nor in the earth; neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look

thereon. And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

The word *אדם*, which is translated *no man*, signifies *no being* or *no person*. There is no word in the original which corresponds to man. The meaning of it is, that no created being, in whatever part of the universe he dwells, was able to open the seals, which were put upon this book, and to explain the true meaning of these short but comprehensive hints of Daniel. The apostle John was much distressed, at the thought that no person could open up the true meaning of these prophecies.

Verses 5th, 6th, 7th.—And one of the elders said unto me, weep not: behold the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof. And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

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While the mind of John was thus distressed, he was informed by one of the elders, that a particular person, well known by the title of the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David, had prevailed to open the book and to loose all the seven seals. These names are both given to Christ, Genes. xlix. 9, 10. Isaiah xi. 1,—10. Thus it was declared to John, that Jesus Christ, should fully open up the meaning of these prophecies, under the gospel dispensation.

That he might not mistake the person, who was to unravel these mysteries, John is shewn him by vision, ver. 6.; of whom he received information by an audible voice, ver. 5. It is not uncommon in prophetic writings, to give two accounts of the same person or thing, different in their circumstances, but exactly the same in their substance. This frequently happens in the book of the Revelation. Indeed it seems to be, almost, an essential part of the construction of prophetic writings. These writings are necessarily, dark and mysterious for the reasons assigned in the commentary on chap. i. When, in such writings, two different descriptions of the same person or thing exactly agree in substance, such an agreement, if not a full proof, is at least a very strong presumption, that the meaning which we affix to both is the right one, and the one intended. Such an agreement in substance, affords a proof very similar to that which arises from two witnesses,

having deponed to the same facts, but in expressions different from each other : Which is much stronger evidence than that which arises from two witnesses having deponed to a number of intricate facts, in the very same expressions.

John saw a lamb, as it were slain. Jesus Christ is styled a lamb, John i. 29,—36. Acts viii. 3. 1 Pet. i. 19. Christ is so well known in Scripture by the appellation of a lamb slain for us, that this symbol as clearly signifies Jesus Christ, as if his name had stood in its place. This lamb is said to have seven horns and seven eyes, which we are told is the hieroglyphic for the Holy Spirit. The seven eyes signify his perfect knowledge and wisdom, and the seven horns his divine power. These influences of the Holy Spirit proceeding from Christ, and extending over all the earth, form a beautiful description of Christ, now in heaven in his state of exaltation. It was not till he had been slain and had risen victorious from the grave, that he said to his apostles Matth. xxviii. 18, 19. "All power is given unto me in heaven and earth, go ye, therefore, and teach all nations." It was not till he was just about to ascend into heaven, that he said unto them, Acts i. 8. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." It was not until Christ ascended

cended unto heaven, that the apostles, Acts ii. 4. "were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began "to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave "them utterance.

The Lamb stood in the space between the throne and the four living creatures, which space was also between the throne and the elders. By this station he is represented as the Mediator between God and the Christian church. Both ministers and people have access to the throne of God only through the mediation of Christ, 1 Tim. ii. 5. "For there is one "God, and one Mediator between God and men, "the man Christ Jesus." 1 John ii. 1. "We have "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the "righteous." Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is al- "so able to save them unto the uttermost, that "come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to "make intercession for them."

Jesus received the sealed book from God in order to open it to the Christian church. Hence this book is entitled chap. i. verse 1. "The Revelation "of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to "shew unto his servants the things which must "shortly come to pass."

Verses 8th, 9th, 10th.—And when he had taken the book, the four beasts, and four and twenty elders fell down before the
Lamb,

Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sung a new song, saying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

The ministers and people of the church of Christ are represented as worshipping Christ, by prayers, and songs of praise, in which they express their warm gratitude to him for revealing to them, the will of God, and particularly for the revelation contained in this book. This book as a revelation from God is a subject of praise to true Christians in every age, however much it is treated with neglect, contempt, and sometimes with ridicule, by some who call themselves Christians. It shall gradually become more and more a subject of praise to the church of Christ as that period approaches, when they shall reign on the earth.

Christ is represented, as true God, and true man. First as true God, because the whole Christian church, represented by the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, pay religious wor-
ship

ship to him, by prayer and praise. They fall down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, the symbol of sacred music and praise, and golden vials full of odours, which are their own prayers; for they are saints. As religious worship is thus paid to him, he must be God, for in many other parts of sacred scripture, and repeatedly in this book, God is declared to be the sole object of all religious worship; and reason approves of the declaration.

And second, as true man, for he was slain, and hath redeemed the church of God by his blood out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. If he had not been man he could not have been slain, his blood could not have been shed.

Christians sing that by the blood of Christ they are redeemed and made priests unto God. It is this blood which expiates their guilt; it is this which gives them a right to approach unto God, in acts of devotion, through the mediation of Christ only, without the intervention of the high priest under the law. They have now near access to God, through the blood of Christ, and therefore are styled priests unto God, Heb. x. 11,—22.

Christians sing, "We shall reign on the earth." This part of their new song refers to that triumphant state of the church of Christ on earth described in chap. xx. which shall commence about the year of Christ 2000, and which shall be explained

plained in the commentary on that chapter. Particularly it refers to what is said chap. xx. 6. "They shall be priests of God, and of Christ, and they shall reign with him a thousand years."

This song of thanksgiving is sung by the living creatures and elders only, the ministers and people of the Christian church only, because it contains grounds of praise in which they are deeply interested; but in which angels have no private interest. They sing of him, who "took not on him the nature of angels;" what angels for that reason, could not sing; "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth."

If any thing more, than was formerly said, were necessary to shew that the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders signify the ministers and people in the church of Christ, those who are Christians indeed, whom the Lord knoweth to be his; the words of this song put the meaning of these symbols out of all doubt. What beings in the whole universe, except true Christians, could sing and say in truth to Christ, "Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us, unto our
" God

“ God, kings and priests.” And every true Christian without exception can say this in truth.

By this song of the ministers and people in the church of Christ, referring to the millenium state of the church on earth, it is signified, that they shall be instruments under God of bringing about that state ; and that that state when it comes shall be peculiarly joyful to them.

Verses 11th, 12th.—And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beasts and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

A very great number of angels now join with the Christian church, in singing a song of praise to Christ, in which angels can join. These are real angels, celestial spirits, who attend the throne of God, and execute the divine commands. Angels join in worshipping Christ. This is fit, the intelligent creature ought to worship its Creator. And Christ is the Creator of angels, as well as of men, Coloss. i. 16, 17. “ By him were all things created

this book, which he hath opened, and especially by the great one of the coming of his kingdom, to which all the previous events lead. Then it shall appear, not only to the church of Christ, not only to the holy angels, but to the world at large, that Christ is possessed of supreme authority, the King of kings and Lord of Lords, that he bestows the true riches, and that even temporal blessings as well as spiritual are at his disposal, that his wisdom is unerring, his strength almighty, that every revolution in the world and in the Christian church illustrates his honour and glory, and that all blessing and true happiness are derived from him.

By angels joining in this song, it is intimated, that angels shall be active instruments in the hand of God in bringing about these events, especially, that illustrious one, the coming of the kingdom of God.

Verses 13th, 14th.—And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twen-

ty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever.

All the creatures of God rational and irrational, animate and inanimate, celestial or terrestrial, unite in singing a song to Him that sitteth upon the throne and to Christ, in which they can all join. It is not meant that the inanimate and irrational creatures of God can praise him with intention so as to worship him; but only that as instruments in his hands, without knowing what they are doing, or why they are doing it, they shall all unite in bringing about the events predicted in this book, and especially that distinguished one by which Christians shall be brought to reign with Christ on earth; in such a way as shall reflect the highest praise on God the Father, and the Son. It is thus, Psalm xix. 1,—4. that “The heavens declare the glory of God: and the firmament sheweth his handy work. That day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night teacheth knowledge. That there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. That their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.”

As shall be shewn in its proper place, it is highly probable, that during the millenium state, the different climates shall be much more mild, and there shall be fewer storms, tempests, and earthquakes;

quakes ; that the brute creatures shall be much more gentle and harmless to one another and to man, most probably because man will be much more gentle and harmless to them, than all these are in the present state of things. Isaiah xi. 6,—9.

“ The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the
“ leopard shall lie down with the kid : and the calf
“ and the young lion, and the fatling together,
“ and a little child shall lead them. And the
“ cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones
“ shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat
“ straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall
“ play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned
“ child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den.
“ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy
“ mountain : for the earth shall be full of the know-
“ ledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

It is, most probably, in reference to the great change for the better, which shall take place at that period, in the state of the air, and the situation and tempers of the brute creation, at a period which may well be denominated the manifestation of the sons of God ; that the Apostle Paul gives the following account of the ardent desires of the brute and even inanimate creation for that period, Rom. viii.

19,—22. “ For the earnest expectation of the crea-
“ ture waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of
“ God. For the creature was made subject to va-
“ nity, not willingly, but by reason of him, who
“ hath

“ hath subjected the same in hope : because the
“ creature itself also shall be delivered from the bon-
“ dage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of
“ the children of God. For we know that the
“ whole creation groaneth, and travelleth in pain
“ together until now.”

One can scarce conceive a greater display of
“ blessing, and honour, and glory, and power” in
the Divine Governor of the world, than that which
such a wonderful and happy change in the animate
and inanimate creatures, would exhibit.

To all these songs of praise the ministers of the
gospel give their Amen ; in testimony of their ar-
dent desires, that such a happy state of the church
of Christ and of the world may come ; and of their
firm hope that it shall come, in the manner, and at
the time predicted in this book ; for the opening
up of which, they, Christians, angels, and the
creatures of God at large are represented thus prai-
sing Christ. All true Christians join in the Amen ;
and they worship the Lamb, which was slain, as
him who is now alive and liveth for ever ; and
who therefore can foresee all events, and act at all
times.

C H A P. VI.

THE OPENING OF SIX OF THE SEALS.

Verses 1st, 2d. **A**ND I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts, saying, Come and see. And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

In vision John saw Christ opening the first seal of the book; and at the same time he heard a voice, loud as thunder, calling unto him, Come and see, which was the voice of one of the living creatures. By the call which one of the living creatures gives to John to come and see, is signified that the ministers of the gospel, in every period of the church, direct the attention of men to this book; and give them such views of it as tend to strengthen their faith and patience, that, when they direct the attention of men to this book, it

it is by the appointment of God; for their voice is like the noise of thunder, which is the symbol of the voice of God, chap. i. 3. "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein."

When Christ opened this first seal, that part of the book or roll which occupied the space between the first and the second seal was opened up, and John saw upon it the following hieroglyphic; the picture of a white horse, with a rider upon him, which rider had a bow in his hand, and a crown upon his head. This picture was drawn in such a manner, according to the rules of the symbolical language, as plainly to shew that this rider was conquering his enemies not only at the time of the opening of that seal; but that he shall also conquer them more completely in a future and distant period.

In the symbolical language, a horse and his rider signifies a dispensation of divine providence. A horse is powerful, swift, and majestic; and though irrational, and an inferior instrument, is conducted by the rider to accomplish his wise and useful purposes, without any intention or plan of his own. In like manner, the dispensations of divine providence are not only irresistible, but have a peculiar dignity and majesty in them, to which the greatest plans of men bear no proportion. And in them
inferior

inferior agents and instruments are employed, used, and directed, by the invisible hand of God, which holds the reins of the government of this world, to accomplish his great, wise, and good purposes, without any intention of their own. The particular nature of the dispensation is specified, by the colour of the horse, and the dress, armour, and appearance of the rider. This observation shall be illustrated in the commentary on the opening of this and the three following seals, by which four different horses and riders are exhibited.

The hieroglyphic now under our view signifies the dispensation of divine providence, with respect to the gospel of Jesus, in its purest and most prosperous states on earth. For whiteness is the symbol of purity, and the bow and the crown that of war and victory. Hence the rider on the white horse is said to have gone forth conquering and to conquer. This hieroglyphic signifies that, in that age in which John saw the vision, even the apostolic age, the church of Christ should appear in great purity, and dignity, that, in a particular manner, it should be under the guidance of Christ; that it should then make great conquests and extend its spiritual dominion far and wide in spite of all its enemies. It farther signifies that, in a future and distant period, it should appear again in its original purity under the direction of Christ, and make still greater conquests and obtain greater triumphs; for

the rider on the white horse went forth, not only conquering in the present, but also that he shall conquer in future. Accordingly chap. xix. 11, —16. the rider on the white horse is again introduced in a most triumphant state over all his enemies. Having before that time conquered all his enemies he hath, on his head, many crowns, as the symbol that he is then King of kings and Lord of lords. That by the white horse and his rider is meant the purity and triumph of the church of Christ, shall fully appear in the commentary on that passage.

The prophecy under this first seal was exactly fulfilled, in that purity of doctrine, holiness of life, and simplicity of manners, for which Christians were distinguished during the first century of the church; and in that rapid progress, with which, even in so short a period, Christianity spread over almost the whole then known world, not only without the aid of worldly power, rank, riches, or interest, but even in opposition to all these, and also to the religious prejudices of both Jews and Gentiles. In the apostolic age the gospel was preached in Judea, Arabia, Pontus, Asia, Capadocia, Bithynia, Parthia, Media, Mesopotamia, Athens, Macedonia, Galatia, Rome, Antioch, and many other parts of the world as appears from sacred scripture. And it very soon spread to Africa, Spain, and Britain.

Language

Language can scarcely give a more minute, and distinct account of the fulfillment of this prophecy, than what is said by Mosheim in his Church History, vol. i. p. 27, 28. "When we consider the rapid progress of Christianity among the Gentile nations, and the poor and feeble instruments, by which this great and amazing event was immediately effected, we must naturally have recourse to an omnipotent and invisible hand, as its true and proper cause. For, unless we suppose here a divine interposition, how was it possible that men destitute of all human aid, without credit, or riches, learning or eloquence could, in so short a time, persuade a considerable part of mankind to abandon the religion of their ancestors? How was it possible that a handful of apostles who, as fishermen and publicans, must have been contemned by their own nation, and as Jews must have been odious to all others, could engage the learned and the mighty; as well as the simple and those of low degree, to forsake their favourite prejudices, and to embrace religion which was an enemy to their corrupt passions? And indeed, there were undoubted marks of a celestial power perpetually attending their ministry. There was in their very language an incredible energy, and amazing power of sending light unto the understanding, and conviction unto the heart. To this were added the commanding

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influence

“ influence of stupenduous miracles, the fortelling of future events, the power of discerning the secret thoughts and intentions of the heart, a magnanimity superior to all difficulties, a contempt of riches and honours, a serene tranquillity in the face of death, and an invincible patience under torments still more dreadful than death itself; and all this accompanied with lives free from all stain, and adorned with the constant practice of sublime virtue. Thus were the messengers of the Divine Saviour, the heralds of his spiritual and immortal kingdom, furnished for their glorious work, as the unanimous voice of antient history so loudly testifies. The event sufficiently declares this; for without these remarkable and extraordinary circumstances, no rational account can be given of the rapid propagation of the gospel throughout the world.”

Verses 3d, 4th.—And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see. And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.

When

When Christ opened the second seal, so much more of the roll, as was contained between the second and third seal, was rolled off, and John saw, drawn upon it, the picture of a red horse, with a rider upon him holding a great sword in his hand.

This hieroglyphic was drawn in such a manner as to intimate, that power was given to this rider to take peace from the earth; and that the inhabitants of it should kill one another. The red colour of this horse, the great sword in the hand of the rider, and the notes intimating that he was to take peace from the earth, and that its inhabitants should kill one another, are as plain a declaration, as could be made in any language, that this hieroglyphic signifies that, during the period to which it refers, there should be much persecution and bloodshed on the earth.

The *earth* is the symbolical name for the Roman empire. We shall meet with this symbol very frequently in this book, and shall find it always used for the Roman empire. In Luke ii. 1. *All the world* is used to signify the Roman empire: "And it came to pass in those days that there went forth a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that *all the world* should be taxed." In this passage, there can be no doubt that, by all the world, is meant all the Roman empire, for the emperors of Rome could never impose taxes beyond the limits of the Roman empire

pire, comprehending all the nations which were tributary to it.

It will be proper that here, once for all, I explain the principle on which the Roman empire is represented by this symbol. The reason why, in this book in particular, and in the writings of the New Testament in general, the Roman empire is called the earth, is, that during the period in which the New Testament was written, and to which the events predicted in this book relate, the Roman empire was the only universal empire on earth known in scripture. And also because it is stiled "The kingdom on earth," by Daniel, whose book of prophecy is opened up in this book, and therefore it is highly proper that the name given to the Roman empire in the short predictions of Daniel, should be preserved in this book, which may be considered as Christ's commentary on Daniel's sealed book. Daniel foretold four great monarchies under the appellation of the *kingdoms of the earth*, and also another and a spiritual kingdom under the appellation of the kingdom of *heaven*, Dan. ii. 31,—45. He predicted these more fully in Dan. vii. 15,—27. which passages the reader is desired to consult with attention. Of these four kingdoms he saith, "they shall rule over all *the earth*. They shall arise out of *the earth*. And the fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon *earth*." Of the other and spiritual kingdom he saith, "And in the days of
" these

“ these kings shall the God of *heaven* set up a kingdom. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the *whole heaven* shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.” These four kingdoms on *earth* were the Assyrian, the Persian, the Grecian, and the Roman empires. These followed each other in regular succession. And each of them, during the period of its continuance, was styled the *earth* in scripture. Thus a proclamation of Nebuchadnezar, a king of the first of these, runs thus, Dan. iv. 1: “ Nebuchadnezar the king, unto all people, nations and languages that dwell on all *the earth*.” Of a king of the second it is said, Ezra i. 2. “ Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of *heaven* hath given me all the kingdoms of the *earth*.” Of the third, under the hieroglyphic of a he goat, it is said, Dan. viii. 5. “ And as I was considering, behold a he goat came from the west in the face of the whole *earth*, Verse 21. And the rough goat is the king of *Grecia*.” Of the fourth kingdom or Roman empire, it is said, Dan. vii. 23. “ The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon *earth*. It is in reference to what is said of the fifth kingdom, as the kingdom which the God of *heaven* shall set up, that the real church of *Christ* is, uniformly, styled the kingdom of *heaven* in the writings of the New Testament. And it is for the same reason that, in this book, *heaven* is the symbol

bol for the church for Christ, and *earth* is the symbol for the Roman empire.

This hieroglyphic predicts bloody persecutions, to which Christians should be exposed in the Roman empire. The rider on the red horse shall take peace from the earth or Roman empire, and they shall kill one another. The contentions in which the Roman empire should be engaged should not be wars with a foreign enemy; and those who should be killed should not be subjects of any other kingdom on earth. The citizens of Rome should persecute and kill those who were their fellow citizens.

Christians are here represented as citizens of Rome. Better citizens never were in the Roman nor any other empire than the Christians of this period were. They had learned from the united precepts and example of the Divine Author of Christianity, to render unto God the things which were God's, and unto Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's. The better Christian any man is, the better subject is he of that civil government, be its form what it will, of which, in the course of divine providence, he is placed as a citizen. Whilst in matters purely religious, and which are not the proper objects of human authority, he calls no man master on earth; in matters of a civil nature, taught by the inspired and infallible standard of scripture, Rom. xiii. 5. "He is subject not
" only

only for wrath but also for conscience sake, verse 7.
 "He renders unto all their due, tribute to whom
 "tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to
 "whom fear, honour to whom honour, 1 Pet. ii.
 17, "He fears God and honours the king." 1 Tim.
 ii. 2,—3. "He prays for kings and all in authority,
 "that Christians may lead quiet and peaceable lives
 "in all godliness and honesty; for this is good and
 "acceptable in the sight of God, our Saviour, who
 "will have all men to be saved and to come to the
 "knowledge of the truth."

As Christians could, with a good conscience, acknowledge themselves citizens of Rome in its heathen state, and did act properly as such in all matters merely civil, they are not distinguished, in this book, from the other citizens of Rome, by a particular name, so long as the empire continued heathen. But whenever the empire became papal, Christians are distinguished, in this book, from the citizens or rather votaries of Rome. Then the former are uniformly styled *saints*, and the latter *them that dwell upon the earth*. And the kingdom of the former is called *heaven*, and that of the latter the *earth*, as shall appear as we proceed. After the Roman empire became papal, as its constitution was then partly of the civil and partly of the religious kind, Christians could not acknowledge themselves citizens of that empire,

without giving up their religious principles to mere human authority.

If we look into the history of the church of Christ, and of the Roman empire, immediately after the expiration of the period predicted under the first seal, we shall find that the hieroglyphic under the second seal was most exactly fulfilled in the bloody persecutions, which were inflicted upon Christians by the Roman emperors Trajan, Adrian, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Antoninus, and Severus, from the beginning to the end of the second century of the Christian church.

Under this seal, most probably, is also included the persecution by the emperor Domitian in the end of the first century. The account of these persecutions is too long to be transcribed into this commentary. But the reader will see it at full length, in Mosheim's Church History, vol. I, from page 76,—80.

It is said, "that they should kill one another." By this expression it is predicted, that the citizens of Rome themselves should persecute and kill the Christians their fellow citizens, even when the emperors were not violent in commanding them to persecute. This part of the prediction was as exactly accomplished as the other parts of it: For frequently, in the second century, when there were no edicts of the emperors or senate of Rome commanding them to persecute the Christians, the people

people and the priests, of their own accord, persecuted them in the most tumultuous, barbarous, and cruel manner.

A very few excerpts from the history of that century will shew the most minute fulfillment of this prediction, Mosheim Hist. vol. i. p. 76. "In the beginning of this century, (the second), there were no laws in force against the Christians; for the senate had annulled the cruel edicts of Nero, and Nerva had abrogated the sanguinary laws of his predecessor Domitian. But, notwithstanding this, a horrid custom prevailed of persecuting the Christians, and even of putting them to death, as often as a bloody priesthood, or an outrageous populace set on by them, demanded their destruction. Hence it happened that even under the reign of the good Trajan, popular tumults, and seditions were raised among the Christians, many of whom fell victims to the rage of a merciless multitude. Such were the riotous proceedings that happened in Bithinia, under the administration of Pliny the younger, who, upon that occasion, wrote to the emperor to know in what manner he was to conduct himself towards the Christians." The answer which he received from Trajan amounted to this; "that the Christians were not to be officiously sought after: but that such, as were accused and convicted of an adherence to Christianity, were to be put to

“ death, as wicked citizens, if they did not re-
“ turn to the religion of their ancestors.

Page 78. “ The emperor Marcus Antoninus is-
“ sued out against the Christians, whom he regard-
“ ed as a vain, obstinate and vicious set of men, e-
“ dicted, which, upon the whole, were very unjust,
“ though we do not know, at this distance of time,
“ their particular contents. In consequence of
“ their imperial edicts, the judges and magistrates
“ received the accusations, which even slaves and
“ the vilest of the perjured rabble brought against
“ the followers of Jesus; and the Christians were
“ put to the most cruel tortures, and were con-
“ demned to meet death in the most barbarous
“ forms, notwithstanding their perfect innocence,
“ and their persevering, and solemn denial of the
“ horrid crimes laid to their charge. The imperial
“ edicts were so positive and express against inflic-
“ ting punishment upon such of the Christians as
“ were guilty of no crime, that the corrupt judges,
“ who, through motives of interest or popularity,
“ desired their destruction, were obliged to suborn
“ false accusers to charge them with actions that
“ might bring them within the reach of the laws.
“ Hence many fell victims to cruel superstition and
“ popular fury, seconded by the corruption of a
“ wicked magistracy, and the connivance of a
“ prince, who with respect to one set of men, forgot
“ the principles and clemency which directed his
“ conduct

"conduct towards all others. Among these victims there were many men of illustrious piety, and some of eminent learning and abilities, such as the holy and venerable Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna, and Justin Martyr, so deservedly renowned for his erudition and philosophy. Many churches, particularly those of Lyons and Vienne were almost entirely destroyed during this violent persecution, which raged in the year 177. and will be an indelible stain upon the memory of the prince by whose order it was carried on."

Verses 5th, 6th.—And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come, and see, And I beheld, and lo, a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

When the third seal was opened, and so much of the roll as was contained between the third and fourth seal rolled off, John saw, upon it, the picture of a black horse, with a rider upon him holding a pair of balances in his hand. And, at the same time,

time, he heard a voice, in the midst of the four living creatures, saying, "A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine."

In the symbolical language, this hieroglyphic signifies a great famine. The black colour is the symbol of famine, because famine destroys the ruddy complexion, and gives the countenance a dark pale look, Lam. v. 10. "Our skin was black like an oven, because of the terrible famine." To eat bread by weight or measure is the symbol for scarcity of food, Ezek. iv. 16, 17. "Moreover he said unto me, "Son of man, behold I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem, and they shall eat bread by weight and with care; and they shall drink water by measure and with astonishment: that they may want bread and water, and be astonished one with another, and consume away for their iniquity."

The measure of wheat is in the original the *chænix*; and the penny is the *denarius*. The former was the ordinary allowance of corn for a labouring man's food for a day, and the latter was his ordinary wages for a day. By the expression therefore "a measure of wheat for a penny," it is intimated that the famine should be so great, that all the exertions and industry of men should be scarcely sufficient to procure them daily subsistence.

Perhaps

Perhaps some persons, unacquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages, comparing the expression here, with the account which Elishah gives of a great plenty, 2 Kings vii. 1, "To morrow about this time shall a measure of fine flour be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria," may consider the expression now under our view as a prediction not of scarcity, but of plenty. All the difficulty, doubt, or mistake in this matter arises from our translation. The word which is translated measure in 2 Kings vii. 1. signifies, and indeed is, in the Hebrew language, *the seah*, a particular vessel, about six times as large as the *chanix*, the particular vessel mentioned in the original, and translated measure in this passage now under our view. The word in the original, which is translated penny, is the denarius. The shekel is a piece of money a little more than three times the value of the denarius or penny. All this must be very clear to every person acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages, the contents of antient measures, and the value of ancient coins. Hence as the *seah* is six times as large as the *chanix*, and the shekel three times as valuable as the denarius; the measure of wheat mentioned by John, must have been twice as dear as the measure of fine flour mentioned by Elishah. But the difference between the prices will appear still greater when we remember
that

that Eliphaz gives the price of fine flour, and John that of wheat only, which is far from being so specifically valuable as fine flour. This therefore must be an account of a famine; for whenever wheat, or the ordinary food of any country rises to double its ordinary price, no man will doubt that there is then a famine in that country. When to this estimate of the price of the *ebanix* of wheat, we add the black colour of the horse and the pair of balances in the hand of the rider, the meaning of the hieroglyphic becomes as plain as if the word *famine* had been put in its place.

No hurt was to be done to the wine and the oil. That is, though there was to be a famine of the necessities of life, yet several of the comforts of life should be continued in plenty.

According to the idiom of the symbolical language, intellectual, moral, and spiritual objects are signified by material and visible ones, which bear some kind of resemblance to them. Thus the food of the body is the symbol of the food of the mind. Hence the famine described in these verses signifies a famine of the ordinary spiritual food of Christians; a famine of the word of God and of the external ordinances of religion. But, whilst there was to be a great scarcity of these, the ordinary spiritual food of Christians, there was to be no diminution of the gracious influences of divine grace, represented by the oil and the wine, Psalm civ. 15.

“ And

“ And wine that maketh glad the heart of man, “ and oil to make his face to shine.” Like wine and oil, it is the influence of divine grace upon the soul, which gives true joy to the heart, and serenity to the countenance. Without this no external means can be of avail for these important purposes, and this, of itself will supply their place, when for wise purposes they are withdrawn by God. From the uses of wine and oil, in the consecrations and sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation, it abundantly appears that they were the appointed symbols of the grace of God.

This prophecy was most exactly fulfilled in the persecutions of Christians under the emperors Severus, Maximian, Gallus, Volusianus, Valerian, Gallienus, Claudius, and Aurelian; during the whole of the third century, as appears from Mosheim’s Church Hist. Vol. i. from page 126, to page 129. And also under the emperor Dioclesian in the year 303. The chief force of all these persecutions was directed against the ministers of religion, the sacred scriptures and other books of Christians, and their assemblies for public worship; by which means there was a very great famine of the word. Under these persecutions, the fortitude and serenity of the Christians were so great, as fully to prove, that, though deprived of the outward means of knowledge and grace, they felt no diminution of the inward aids and consolations of Christianity.

The following passage, from the history of the period to which this seal refers, will shew how exactly it was fulfilled in the famine of the word. Moheim's Church Hist. Vol. i. page 164. "Dioclesian, however, stood for some time unmoved by the treacherous arts of a selfish and superstitious priesthood, who, when they perceived the inefficacy of their cruel efforts, addressed themselves to Maximinus Galerius, one of the Cæsars, in order to accomplish their unrighteous purposes. This prince, whose gross ignorance of every thing but military affairs was accompanied with a fierce and savage temper, was a proper instrument for executing their designs. Set on therefore by the malicious insinuations of the Heathen priests, the suggestions of a superstitious mother, and the ferocity of his own natural dispositions, he solicited Dioclesian with such indefatigable importunity, in such an urgent manner, for an edict against the Christians, that he at length obtained his horrid purpose. For in the year 303, when this emperor was at Nicomedia, an order was obtained to pull down the churches of the Christians, to burn all their books and writings, and to take from them all their civil rights and privileges, and render them incapable of any honours or civil promotions. This first edict, though rigorous and severe, extended not to the lives of the Christians, for Dioclesian

“ clesian was extremely averse to slaughter and
“ bloodshed ; it was however destructive to many
“ of them, particularly to those who refused to de-
“ liver the sacred books into the hands of the ma-
“ gistrates. Many Christians, therefore, and among
“ them several bishops and presbyters, seeing the
“ consequences of this refusal, delivered up all the
“ religious books and other sacred things which
“ were in their possession, in order to save their lives.
“ This conduct was highly condemned by the most
“ steady and resolute Christians, who looked upon
“ this compliance as sacrilegious, and branded
“ those who were guilty of it with the ignominious
“ appellation of traditors.

Verses 7th, 8th.—And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see. And I looked, and behold a pale horse ; and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him : and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

When Christ opened this seal, so much of the roll as was contained between the fourth and the fifth seal was rolled off ; and John saw upon it the

picture of a pale horse, and a rider upon him, whose name was Death, and the symbol for the grave followed with him. 'Αδης the word translated *hell*, signifies the *grave*. He was at the same time informed, that power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

By the pale colour of the horse, the name of the rider *Death*, his follower the *grave*, and the explanatory note bearing that power was given unto them to kill, it is plainly declared that the persecution, predicted by this hieroglyphic, was to be one in which such great numbers of Christians should be killed by the sword, hunger, and savage beasts, that Death, if turned into a person and appearing among men, could not have killed them in greater numbers. And that the burials of them should be so frequent, that the graves might well be represented as always open to receive their dead bodies. This persecution was to extend over a fourth part of the earth, that is of the Roman empire.

At the time to which this seal relates, the Roman empire, then very extensive, was divided into four parts, and governed by two emperors and two Cæsars. By a fourth part, therefore, of the empire, is to be understood so much of it as was under the jurisdiction

jurisdiction of one of these four rulers; though the territory, over which each of them ruled, might not be of the same extent.

By looking into the history of the Christian church, and of the Roman empire, immediately after the period of the third seal, we shall see the predictions under this one exactly accomplished. In the beginning of the fourth century of the church Maximian Hercules was emperor in the west, and Constantius, the father of Constantine the great, was Cæsar or governor of Britain, Dioclesian was emperor in the east, and Maximian Galerius, Cæsar in the east. In a short time, Galerius obliging Dioclesian and Maximian Hercules to resign the purple, declared himself sole emperor of the east, while the administration of the western provinces was still in the hands of Constantius. During these reigns, which were from about the year of Christ 300 to the year 311, the persecutions against the Christians were carried to the most barbarous and shocking height in the eastern part of the empire, first under Dioclesian, and after his abdication, under Galerius.

As the persecution predicted under this seal was to extend, not over the whole, but only over a part of the Roman empire, the accomplishment of *this circumstance* must strongly strike every candid mind. For, notwithstanding all the violence of Dioclesian and Galerius against the Christians in
the

the east; Constantius not only did not persecute, but even countenanced them in the western provinces of the empire.—That the Christians were, at this period, countenanced in the western part of the empire by Constantius, Mosheim declares, *Hist.* vol. i. p. 163. with whom Eusebius agrees, Book viii. chap. 13. and also Gibbon vol. ii. p. 382,—393. “Dioclesian though much addicted to superstition, did not however entertain any aversion to the Christians: and Constantius Chlorus, who following the dictates of right reason alone in the worship of the Deity, had abandoned the absurdities of polytheism, treated them with condescension and benevolence. This alarmed the pagan priests, whose interests were so closely connected with the continuance of the ancient superstitions, and who apprehended, not without reason, that to their great detriment, the Christian religion would become daily more universal and triumphant throughout the empire. Under these anxious fears of the downfall of their authority, they addressed themselves to Dioclesian, whom they knew to be of a timorous and credulous disposition, and by fictitious oracles, and other such perfidious stratagems, endeavoured to engage him to persecute the Christians.”

The numbers that were killed in this persecution were astonishingly great. In some places the blood of the slain itself made little brooks, and coloured

loured large rivers. Eusebius says, that he hath seen the actors of that persecution so fatigued, and their swords so blunted with killing the Christians, that they were obliged to be relieved by fresh persons, *Fox Mar.* p. 103. *Euseb. Hist.* l. viii. c. 9, 10. 11, 12.

At this time, there was also a great sickness and mortality in the Roman empire, so that from the mortality, (Death), and the persecution, men died faster than the living could bury them; by which means, dogs were so accustomed to eat dead mens flesh, that they became a terror to the living lest they should eat them also. *Euseb. Hist.* l. viii. c. 10. Well then might this horse be pale; his rider Death, and the grave following him.

The Christians were killed by being drawn asunder by horses, cloven by trees, cast to wild beasts, sent to sea in boats without any provision. There was an emulation among their persecutors, who might invent the most torturing deaths to Christians, *Fox's Tables, Euseb. Hist.* l. 8.

Eachard describes the different modes, by which Christians were put to death in this persecution under Dioclesian and his successor Galerius, almost in the very words of this prophecy. In the prophecy it is said, "And power was given them to kill with sword and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.— And Eachard says, *Rom. Hist.* vol. ii. p. 533. "As this was the last persecution, so it was the most
" severe

“ severe of all others, like the last efforts of an ex-
“ piring enemy, who uses his utmost power and
“ strength to give a parting blow. It were endless,
“ and almost incredible, to enumerate the varie-
“ ty of sufferers and torments ; it is sufficient to ob-
“ serve, in this place, that they were scourged to
“ death, had their flesh torn off with pinchers, and
“ mangled with broken pots, were cast to lions, ty-
“ gers, and other wild beasts, were burned, be-
“ headed, crucified, thrown into the sea, torn in
“ pieces by the distorted boughs of trees, roasted by
“ gentle fires, and holes made in their bodies for
“ melted lead to be poured into their bowels.
“ This persecution lasted ten years under Diocle-
“ sian and some of his successors ; and the incredi-
“ ble number of Christians which suffered death
“ and punishment, made them conclude that
“ they had completed their work. And in an an-
“ cient inscription, they tell the world that they
“ had effaced the name and superstition of the
“ Christians, and had restored and propagated the
“ worship of the Gods.”

How exactly this persecution corresponded to the prediction in these verses is abundantly clear from Mosheim's *Hist.* vol. i. from page 164, to 166. Of these three pages I shall transcribe only two short paragraphs. Page 165. “ In the second
“ year of this horrible persecution, the 304th
“ of the Christian æra, a fourth edict was pub-
“ lished

“lished by Dioclesian, at the instigation of Ga-
 “lerius, and the other inveterate enemies of the
 “Christian name. By it the magistrates were or-
 “dered and commissioned to force all Christians,
 “without distinction of rank or sex, to sacrifice to
 “the gods, and were authorised to employ all sorts
 “of torments in order to drive them to this act of
 “apostacy. The diligence and zeal of the Roman
 “magistrates, in the execution of this inhuman e-
 “dict, had like to have proved fatal to the Christian
 “cause.—This revolution restored peace to the
 “Christians, who lived in the western provinces,
 “under the administration of Constantius; whilst
 “those of the east, under the tyranny of Galerius,
 “had their sufferings and calamities dreadfully
 “augmented.”

Verses 9th, 10th, 11th—And when he had o-
 pened the fifth seal I saw under the altar, the
 souls of them that were slain for the word of
 God, and for the testimony which they held.
 And they cried with a loud voice, saying,
 How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou
 not judge and avenge our blood on them that
 dwell on the earth? And white robes were
 given unto every one of them, and it was said
 unto them, that they should rest yet for a lit-
 tle season, until their fellow servants also, and

their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.

The hieroglyphics under the three preceding seals predicted the many, long, and severe persecutions, which Christians were to suffer under the heathen emperors in the second and third centuries, and in a part of the fourth, and which they have accordingly suffered in the times and manner foretold. The last of these hieroglyphics represented these persecutions brought to the height, and Christians almost totally killed and extirpated from the earth by them. Under such a vision, John might have been ready to have despaired for ever of the Christian church. And those few Christians, who survived these persecutions, might have been apt to conclude, from the prosperity of the Roman empire, notwithstanding all its cruelties to the Christians, that certainly Christianity was not from God; else he would have avenged upon their persecutors the injustice done to his religion and worshippers. At this very crisis, and when it was natural to suppose that such was the state of their minds, Christ opens the fifth seal. And that part of the book, which was contained between the fifth and sixth seal was rolled off.

On looking into this part of the book, John saw the picture of an altar, such as that, on which sacrifices

crifices were offered under the Mosaic dispensation. Under this altar he saw the picture of some refined creatures; whom, by certain explanatory notes, he knew to be the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held; and who, he understood, were crying with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, ho-
 "ly and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our
 "blood on them that dwell on the earth." He saw also the picture of white robes given unto them, and understood that it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season.

Nothing can be more clear, than that these verses refer to those, who had suffered as martyrs for Christ under the Heathen emperors, as predicted under the three preceding seals. After death and the grave had killed their bodies, John was informed, by Christ, that their souls were still alive in a separate state. Their persecutors had killed their bodies; but after that, they had no more that they could do. The sword, hunger, mortality, wild beasts, death and the grave, have no power over their immortal souls, these survive the body, and are happy with the Lord in the heavenly paradise. Their persecutors, that they might apologise to the world; and perhaps, to their own hearts, for murdering them, have represented them as seditious and turbulent persons, who turn the world upside down, and who were justly punished with

death, as pests to civil society. But John was informed, by him who knew best, that the real cause for which they slew them, was their steady attachment to the word of God, inspired scripture as the only infallible standard of their faith, worship, and obedience, in every part of religion, and not only for professing their faith in God, their faith in Jesus as the Christ and the Son of God, their faith in sacred scripture, as the word of God, and the only infallible standard of faith, worship, and obedience; but also for holding fast that profession and testimony, when forbidden to do so by the Roman emperors. And hence, instead of having been put to death as evil doers, that God, who perfectly knows the hearts of them, and of their persecutors, considers them as victims to him. This is intimated by their being under the altar.

The blood of the sacrifice, the blood of every beast is stiled its life, in scripture. The blood of the calf or bullock offered, under the law, for a sin-offering or a burnt-offering was poured at the foot of the altar, Lev. viii. 15, and ix. 9. Hence the blood poured at the bottom of the altar, is the symbol, which signifies that the soul of the true worshipper is purified and devoted to God.

These martyrs are victims to their attachment to the will and worship of the true God. Had they given up their bibles, professed to believe the polytheism of Rome, denied Jesus to be the Christ and the Son of God, and sacrificed to the gods,
their

their blood would not have been shed by their inhuman, tyrannical, and impious persecutors. It seems to be an essential part in the constitution of God's moral government of the world, that the vengeance of heaven shall follow those men; who, with malevolent hearts, imbrue their hands in the blood of their fellow men. The voice of Abel's blood cried to God, from the ground, for vengeance on the guilty head of Cain. This is the express declaration of God, Gen. ix. 5, 6. "And surely your blood of your lives will I require: at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man. Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

When innocent blood is shed not by individuals merely, but by communities of men; it seems to be peculiarly fit that vengeance should be taken on these communities in this world in the course of divine providence, independent of that account, which every guilty individual must give for himself at the bar of God. As it is only in this world, that communities exist in their collective capacity, it is in this world only that they can be punished in their public character. When Pilate, after he had condemned Jesus, took water, washed his hands, and declared that he was innocent of the blood of that just person; the whole multitude of the people of the

the Jews said, let his blood be upon us and our children. The history of the Jews, clearly shews, that the vengeance of Heaven hath come upon them as a people or collective body, for the blood of the just one. Their city, temple, and kingdom, have all been destroyed, with evident marks of divine displeasure, and they have long been scattered through every kingdom of the world, while they have no kingdom of their own. Great is the guilt of shedding any innocent blood.

The highest degree of guilt of this kind, was that of those who shed the blood of Jesus, the just One. Next to this is that of those who have shed the blood of saints for their steady attachment to the word of God, and to the testimony of Jesus. As so many thousands of saints were slain in the most barbarous and shocking manner; for the word of God, and for the testimony, which they held, by the emperors, senate, and people of Rome, during a part of the first, the whole of the second and third, and a part of the fourth century, most certainly so much innocent blood must call for divine vengeance upon that people and empire.

We are not to suppose, that the departed souls of the martyrs entertained any revenge or malice against their persecutors. Even in this world, in which they were much less perfect than they are in the future state, they forgave their persecutors, and even prayed to God for pardon, repentance,
and

and happiness to them; it is not, therefore, ever to be supposed that revenge now dwells in their purified breasts in heaven. Every real Christian learns, from the highest authority and example, to forgive his enemies, and to pray for their pardon. For he who said, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses," with his last breath, prayed for his murderers, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." In Rom xii. 19,—21. we have the great precept of the gospel on this matter, on which the Christian acts. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." But though they entertain no revenge against their persecutors; their innocent blood calls for vengeance; while their hearts pray for pardon. The righteous Judge of the world will avenge the cause of innocence, of truth, and of his church. Vengeance is his, he will repay.

They are said to call with a loud voice, because at the period of this seal, the year 311, the Christian church had suffered so much and so long, and was thereby brought so low, that it appeared, to even

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the best Christians, that it could not long survive, unless heaven should soon interpose to punish and crush its enemies. At the same time, they leave the time and manner of vengeance to the wise determination of God only, saying, "How long!" This vengeance flows from his holiness and truth, two essential attributes of God, on which the Christian depends, for the final victory of the Christian church over all her enemies. Because God is holy, he will punish, in the fittest time, those who are polluted by shedding innocent blood. Because God is true, and hath said clearly and repeatedly, in sacred scripture, that at the hand of every man's brother, will he require the life of man, and that whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; those shall be punished by him who have shed the blood of martyrs for the word of God. Because God is holy, because he is true, and hath promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church; therefore, the kingdom of God, which is righteousness, shall never be overthrown by all the policy and power of the devil and of all his angels, whether spiritual or incarnate.

The blood of the martyrs is to be avenged on them that dwell on the earth; that is, according to the interpretation given of the earth in the fourth verse, on the people of Rome, the rulers and citizens of that great empire. As we proceed in
this

this book, we shall find the same expression uniformly and frequently used to signify the Roman people. On whom, in consistency with the holiness and truth of God, ought their blood to be avenged, if not on that people who shed it?

The souls of the martyrs cried, Dost thou not judge and avenge our blood? This judgement and vengeance do not refer to the final judgement, when God shall judge all men as individuals, in righteousness, according to their works, and shall denounce the irrevocable sentence of condemnation on the wicked: But it refers to a public and striking approbation, in this present world, which God shall give to the Christian religion and all its true votaries, in the course of his providential government of the world, at a period about two hundred years distant from the present year; and to a condemnation and overthrow equally public and striking, which he shall then pass and inflict upon the Roman empire, in its last form of government, as guilty of the blood of saints, and a public enemy of all those whose religion is modelled on the word of God.

This judgement and vengeance are mentioned in chap. xiv. 6,—8. xviii. 20. and xix. 2. in which last passage it is said of God, "For true and righteous are his judgements, for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with

“ her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of
“ his servants at her hand.”

All these passages, as shall be shewn in the commentary upon them, refer to that great and final overthrow of the Roman empire, under its last head, the papal one, which shall manifest the vengeance of heaven on that persecuting empire, for the blood of the servants of God ; and which shall be as it were the passing and publishing this judgement or sentence of God ; that the religion which is taught in the sacred scriptures is the religion from God, and that those who have adhered to the bible as the standard of their faith, worship, and practice, are the true worshippers of God.

Until the fall of papal Rome, all the votaries of Rome give their testimony as witnesses, that the Roman catholic religion is the true religion, and that the church of Rome is the church of God.

Until that time, all real Christians give their testimony as witnesses, that that is the true religion which is taught in the sacred scriptures, and that all those individuals, in whatever country or age they live, whose faith, worship, and obedience are strictly modelled on the word of God, all those whom the Lord knoweth to be his, and who naming the name of Christ depart from evil, are the church of God. Until that time the great cause is, as it were under trial. While the trial is going on, some are taking one side, and others another, as

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is the case in all trials, in which many are misled by their prejudices, passions, or interests, some are saying, that the witnesses for Popery are attesting the truth, and others, that the witnesses for the word of God are attesting the truth. During all this time, the supreme and infallible Judge, the Lord holy and true, hath not given the public sentence or judgement in the cause: but at that day, when papal Rome shall be finally overthrown, and when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God, and of his Christ, the judgement of God, shall, in the course of divine providence, be publicly passed against the kingdom and church of Rome, and in favours of that religion which is delineated in the sacred scriptures. Then it shall appear to the whole world, and even to their keenest enemies, that all true Christians however persecuted, and defamed as heretics by the church of Rome, were true witnesses, since the infallible Judge hath decided the great cause of religion exactly in terms of their testimony.

It is in reference to this judgement, that during the whole time from the rise to the final overthrow of the papal kingdom, true Christians are called God's *two witnesses* in chap. xi. of this book; and that the overthrow of papal Rome, and the commencement of the reign of the Christian church on earth is stiled *God's judgement*, as in the

passages already cited. The vengeance and judgement therefore, which are mentioned in the verses now under our view, are that judgement, which shall be given in favours of that religion, for which those martyrs fell, who were slain for the word of God ; and that vengeance which shall fall upon that persecuting kingdom, which slew them, when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of Christ ; and when the Roman name, kingdom, power, and religion shall be destroyed for ever.

It is most probable, that the Christians who lived about the time to which this seal refers, imagined, that the time of this judgement was just at hand. But the answer given in verse 11. tells them, that their blood was not to be avenged on the Roman people, until others, who might justly be called their fellow servants, and their brethren, should be killed as they were : but, in the mean time, white robes should be given to every one of them, and they should rest. This answer is a clear prediction of the persecutions of Christians by Papal Rome. Those who were to be slain, were to be the servants of God, as well as those Christians who were slain by Heathen Rome ; they were to be their brethren, sons of God as well as they were.

This judgement and vengeance was not to come upon the Roman people, until all these persecutions,

tions, which have begun long ago, under Papal Rome should be fulfilled, that is, finished. The reason of this delay is obvious. Till then their iniquity was not filled up, and God does not destroy any individual, or kingdom, till their iniquity is filled up. This judgement, as shall be shewn in the proper place, is to destroy the Roman government, and for ever to blot its name from among the kingdoms of the world ; and therefore it could not be brought upon it, so long as one servant of God, whom that people were to slay, had not fallen by their bloody hands. But the martyrs, who were slain by Heathen Rome, should rest in the mean time. They should be perfectly happy in their departed and separate state. They should rest from all their labours, trials, and sufferings, and their works should follow them. In the heavenly state, they will enjoy all that pure and exalted happiness, which, when freed from every external inconvenience, and blessed with every external advantage, accords to the nature of the spirits of just men made perfect.

They not only rest, but white robes are also given to them. The white robes were given unto them, at the period of time to which this seal refers. White robes, as was formerly shewn, are the symbol for the righteousness of saints. This is expressly said to be its signification, chap. xix. 8. These martyrs were said to be holy persons, (saints),
before

before they were slain. True Christians knew them to be holy ; but their persecutors aspersed them as enemies to the gods, and pests to society. Hence, when it is said that white robes were given unto them, the meaning of it is, that their characters shall be cleared up, that their memory shall be held in great respect, even by the Roman people; and by them, the greatest respect shall be paid to their memories, as of saints who had fallen martyrs to the truth.

This prediction hath been most exactly fulfilled. In the year 325, Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor, was vested with the sole government of the Roman empire. Under his reign, the highest respect was paid to the memory of those martyrs who had been slain, for the word of God, by his predecessors, and even by his immediate ones. Ever since that time, the highest respect hath been paid to the memory of these martyrs, by the people and church of Rome.

Whilst Papal Rome hath fulfilled, and still is fulfilling, the one part of this prediction, by killing the servants of God, and the brethren of these Christians, who were martyrs under the Heathen emperors; she hath fulfilled, and still is fulfilling, the other part of it, by paying the highest honour and respect to the memory of these martyrs. How exactly does the conduct of Rome resemble that of the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom Christ said,
Matth.

Matth. xxiii 29,—32, “Wo unto you Scribes and
“ Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye build the tombs of
“ the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the
“ righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of
“ our fathers, we would not have been partakers
“ with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore,
“ ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the
“ children of them who killed the prophets. Fill
“ ye up therefore the measure of your fathers.”
Read also verses 33,—38.

. I cannot pass over this seal, without making the following observations.—This book was written by John, about the year of Christ 95. In that year he foretold, in these verses, that many martyrs should be slain by the Roman emperors, in the Heathen state of Rome, that many should be slain by Papal Rome; and that whilst Papal Rome was slaying the Christians, she should express the highest respect for the memory of those Christian martyrs, who had been slain by Heathen Rome. These prophecies have been fulfilled, and still are fulfilling, in a most exact manner, at the distance of many hundred years. The men who have been fulfilling them, act a part, the most inconsistent and absurd, whilst at the same time, they act freely, and without any constraint upon their moral powers. What can be more inconsistent and absurd, than for the same society of men, at the same time, to pay the greatest respect, and even something

thing too like religious worship, to those Christians, who were slain as martyrs for the word of God, by the Heathen emperors, whilst they are slaying Christians for the same attachment to the word of God ; Christians, who in every respect are the fellow servants and the brethren of those martyrs whose departed spirits they almost adore? Of this inconsistency and absurdity the church of Rome hath long been guilty. It is very difficult to determine, whether their zeal for persecuting the living, or for canonizing the dead saints is the greatest.

In these events, brought about by the conduct of moral agents, in these events, which equally mark liberty of will, and inconsistency of conduct in these agents, let us read the following important truths ; that John was guided by the unerring Spirit of God, in writing this book ; that all things, even those which are most closely connected with the conduct and intentions of moral agents are clearly foreseen by God ; that God governs the world ; that the foreknowledge of God, and his moral government of the world, do not interfere with, nor restrain the moral powers of men ; and that the very spirit of prophecy is to give testimony to Christ and Christianity.

Verses 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th 16th, 17th.—
And I beheld, when he had opened the sixth
seal,

seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind: and the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places: and the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond man, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains: and said to the mountains and the rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

When Jesus opened the sixth seal, and rolled off so much of the book as was contained between the 6th and 7th seals, John saw the following hieroglyphic painted upon it. He saw an earthquake and a violent storm, which affected both the earth, sun, moon, and stars, and he saw the kings of the earth, the great men, and the mean men, hiding

themselves from it in the dens and rocks of the mountains. By explanatory notes, it was shewn, that they were calling upon the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, and hide them not only from the storm, but also from the cause of it, the wrath of him who sitteth upon the throne, and of the Lamb; for they were convinced that the great day of the wrath of the Lamb was come, and that none should be able to withstand him.

In the symbolical language, an *earthquake* always signifies a revolution in the political and moral world. What more natural representation can there be of the changes, which a revolution makes in the moral and political world, and the violence with which they are brought about, than those changes which an earthquake produces in the state and appearance of the natural world, and the violent and irresistible manner in which these are produced. In this book, we meet with an *earthquake*, chap. viii. 5. xi. 13, 11, 19. and xvi. 18. In every one of these passages, as well as in the one now under our view, it signifies a revolution in the moral and political world, as shall clearly appear in the commentary upon them. The symbolical language is so regular, and the meaning of every symbol is so fixed and determinate, that not only this symbol, but also every other one preserves its proper meaning, wherever it occurs through the whole book, which shall appear as we proceed. It
may

may not be improper to observe, that that uniformity of signification of the same symbol, which runs through the whole of this book, is a strong proof, that the signification given to them is the right one.

When the revolution is to be brought about by wars and bloodshed, then the earthquake is accompanied with a great storm, as it is in this hieroglyphic. In it there is a very particular enumeration of circumstances, which clearly point out the nature and extent of this revolution, and the persons who shall be chiefly hurt by it.

The violence of the wars, and the great effusion of blood, by which the revolution should be brought about, are signified by the sun becoming black, the moon like blood, the stars of heaven falling to the earth, and the heaven departing as a scroll.

“Every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” This revolution shall not be confined to the continent, the seat of empire alone; nor to one or many of the islands, which are its provinces; but shall extend over the whole empire, and all its provinces.

“And the kings of the earth, &c.”—It was formerly shewn, that in this book, the earth signifies the Roman empire. Therefore, the kings of the earth are the Roman emperors. They, and all the other descriptions of men enumerated in verse 15th,

which correspond to the various descriptions of men in the Roman empire, from the emperors down to the bond men or slaves, by which last description, the boasted liberty of Rome was disgraced, should be all so terrified at this revolution, that many of them should prefer death, even when inflicted by their own hands, to a submission to that great revolution. They should be afraid of him that sitteth upon the throne, that is God, and of the wrath of the Lamb, that is Christ.

That great success which, at this revolution, should attend Christianity and Christians, who had been persecuted by them for a long time, should convince them that the great day of Christ's wrath was come, and that none of his enemies should be able to stand before him. When they should see Christianity and Christians, who had been persecuted for above two hundred years, by all the force of the Roman empire, and in their opinion, destroyed and buried, never more to rise again, in less than twenty years revive, expel heathenism from Rome, and reign over the empire, they should recognize the hand of God; but conscious of their accumulated guilt, and of the desperate wickedness and hardness of their hearts, they should, in despair, wish for death, and some of them should even inflict it upon themselves. They should then sink into despair, because they should be convinced that it would be impossible

impossible for them to resist that divine power of Christ, which should, with such ease, banish heathenism from, and establish Christianity in Rome, in spite of the united efforts of emperors, priests, people, civil magistrates, military officers, free citizens, and bond slaves.

This prediction, in all its parts, was most exactly accomplished in that great revolution, which took place in the Roman empire, when it was changed from Heathen to Christian, under Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor of Rome. The great and various struggles and civil wars, by which this revolution in the empire was brought about, began in the three hundredth and sixth year of the Christian æra. This was the very year at which the events predicted under the fourth seal ended.

The fifth seal did not take up any period of time, as must be evident from its nature, as already explained. Hence the events predicted under this sixth seal, in course of time must follow close upon those predicted under the fourth seal. This great revolution was completed in the year 325 of the Christian æra, when Constantine came to the sole government of the empire, on the death of Licinius. The various struggles and civil wars which took place during these twenty years, the vexation, distress, despair, deaths, and even self-murders of the Heathen emperors in that period, the extent
of

of this revolution over the whole empire, including all its provinces however distant, the legal and spirited abolition of the heathen worship and temples, the legal establishment of the Christian religion, the provision made for its ministers, and the very great public countenance given to Christians, through the whole empire, by the emperor Constantine upon this revolution, are the most minute, exact, and striking accomplishments of the predictions under this seal. Were it not a fact quite incontestible, that these predictions were written and published by John above two hundred years before that revolution, the enemies of revelation, would have been apt to have said, that they were historical and not prophetic, having been written after the event.

The history of this great revolution is so particularly noticed by all the historians of that period civil and ecclesiastic, and is so generally, I had almost said universally, known, that it is unnecessary to transcribe much of the history of that revolution, and of the circumstances which accompanied it, in order to prove their conformity to, and accomplishment of the predictions under this seal. I shall therefore insert only a very few passages from the historians of that period. *Mosheim*, vol. i. page 166.

“ The divine providence, however, was preparing
“ more serene and happy days for the church. In
“ order to this, it confounded the schemes of Ga-
“ lerus,

"lerius, and brought his counsels to nothing. In
 "the year 306, Constantius Chlorus dying in Bri-
 "tain, the army saluted, with the title of Augus-
 "tus, his son Constantine, surnamed afterwards
 "the Great, on account of his illustrious exploits.
 "and forced him to accept the purple. This pro-
 "ceeding, which must have stung the tyrant Ga-
 "lerius to the heart, he was, nevertheless, obliged
 "to bear with patience, and even to confirm with
 "the outward marks of his approbation. Soon
 "after, a civil war broke out, the occasion of
 "which was as follows: Maximian Galerius, in-
 "wardly enraged at the election of Constantine by
 "the soldiers, sent him indeed the purple, but gave
 "him only the title of Cæsar, and created Severus
 "emperor. Maxentius the son of Maximian Her-
 "culeus, and son-in-law to Galerius, provoked at
 "the preference given to Severus, assumed the
 "imperial dignity, and found the less difficulty in
 "making good this usurpation, that the Roman
 "people hoped, by this means, to deliver them-
 "selves from the unsupportable tyranny of Gale-
 "rius. Having caused himself to be proclaimed
 "emperor, he chose his father Maximian for his
 "colleague, who receiving the purple from
 "the hands of his son, was universally acknow-
 "ledged in that character by the Senate and peo-
 "ple of Rome. Amidst all these troubles and com-
 "motions Constantine, beyond all human expect-
 "tation,

"tation, made his way to the imperial throne.

Page 166. "At length Maximian Galerius, who
"had been the author of their (i. e. the Christians)
"heaviest calamities, being brought to the brink
"of the grave, by a most dreadful and lingering
"disease, whose complicated horrors no language
"can express, published in the year 311 a solemn
"edict, ordering the persecution to cease, and re-
"storing freedom and repose to the Christians, a-
"gainst whom he had exercised such unheard of
"cruelties."

Pages 166 and 167. "After the death of Gale-
"rius, his dominions fell into the hands of Maxi-
"mian and Licinius, who divided between them
"the provinces he had possessed. At the same
"time, Maxentius, who had usurped the govern-
"ment of Africa and Italy, determined to make
"war on Constantine, who was now master of
"Spain, and the Gauls, and this with the ambitious
"view of reducing under his dominion the whole
"western empire. Constantine apprized of this
"design, marched with a part of his army into I-
"taly, gave battle to Maxentius at a small distance
"from Rome, and defeated totally that abomina-
"ble tyrant, who, in his precipitate flight, fell in-
"to the Tyber and was drowned. After this vic-
"tory, which happened in the year 312, Con-
"stantine and his colleague Licinius, immediately
"granted to the Christians, a full power of living
according

“ according to their own laws and institutions;
 “ which power was specified still more clearly in
 “ another edict drawn up at Milan in the follow-
 “ ing year. Maximin indeed, who ruled in the
 “ east, was preparing new calamities for the Chris-
 “ tians, and threatening also with destruction the
 “ western emperors. But his projects were discon-
 “ certed by the victory which Licinius gained o-
 “ ver his army, and through distraction and despair
 “ he ended his life by poison in the year 313.”

Eachard, in his *Roman Hist.* p. 550. says of
 Maximin. “ In the east, Maximin revoked the li-
 “ berties granted the Christians, makes war with
 “ Licinius, but being defeated with great slaughter
 “ of his numerous army, puts many priests and
 “ soothsayers to death as cheats. Not long after,
 “ as he was endeavouring to try the event of a se-
 “ cond battle, he was struck with a violent distem-
 “ per, with intolerable pains and torments all over
 “ his body, he wasted to nothing, became quite
 “ blind, and died raging and in despair: confessing
 “ upon his death bed, that all this was but a just
 “ punishment upon him, for his spiteful and viru-
 “ lent proceedings against Christ and his religion.”

Lactantius has these remarkable words, page 49.
 “ Cum jam terræ marique perterreretur, nec ullum
 “ speraret refugium, angore animi ac metu, con-
 “ fugit ad mortem, quasi ad remedium malorum,
 “ quæ Deus in caput ejus ingessit.” “ Now when

" he was terrified both by sea and land, and could
 " hope for no refuge from the vexation and fear of
 " his mind, he flew to death, as to the cure of the
 " evils which God had brought upon his head."
 And so taking poison, he died in that miserable
 manner. Is not this to call upon the rocks and
 mountains to fall upon them, and to hide them
 from the face of him who sitteth upon the throne,
 and from the wrath of the Lamb? Are not the
 kings of the earth affrighted and in despair? *Mos-*
heim Hist Vol. i p. 170. " The joy with which
 " the Christians were elated on account of the fa-
 " vourable edicts of Constantine and Licinius, was
 " soon interrupted by the war which broke out
 " between these two princes. Licinius being de-
 " feated in a pitched battle in the year 314, made
 " a treaty of peace with Constantine, and observed
 " it during the space of nine years. But his turbu-
 " lent spirit rendered him an enemy to repose; and
 " his natural violence, seconded, and still further
 " incensed, by the suggestions of the Heathen
 " priests, armed him against Constantine, in the
 " year 324, for the second time. During this war,
 " he endeavoured to engage in his cause all those
 " who remained attached to the ancient supersti-
 " tion, that thus he might oppress his adversary
 " with numbers; and, in order to this, he persecu-
 " ted the Christians in a cruel manner, and put to
 " death many of their bishops, after trying them

w it

" with torments of the most barbarous nature.
 " But all his enterprizes proved abortive; for af-
 " ter several battles fought without success, he was
 " reduced to the necessity of throwing himself at the
 " victor's feet, and imploring his clemency, which,
 " however, he did not long enjoy, for he was strang-
 " led by the order of Constantine, in the year 325.
 " After the death of Licinius, the empire was rul-
 " ed by Constantine alone, until his death; and the
 " Christian cause experienced, in its happy progress,
 " the effects of his auspicious administration. This
 " zealous prince employed all the resources of his ge-
 " nius, all the authority of his laws, and all the enga-
 " ing charms of his munificence and liberality, to
 " efface by degrees the superstitions of paganism,
 " and to propagate Christianity in every corner of
 " the Roman empire. He had learned, no doubt,
 " from the disturbances continually excited by Li-
 " cinius, that neither himself, nor the empire could
 " enjoy a fixed state of tranquillity and safety, as
 " long as the ancient superstition subsisted; and
 " therefore, from this period, he openly opposed
 " the sacred rites of Paganism, as a religion detri-
 " mental to the interests of the state."

C H A P. VII,

VISION II.

Verse 1st, **A**ND after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree,

The whole book was opened in the preceding chapter, except so much of it as was contained between the seventh seal and the end of it. A great part of the book is contained under the seventh seal, as shall appear, when the whole hieroglyphics contained under that seal fall to be explained.

As the state of the Roman empire, and of the Christian church, should be very different in the period of the seventh seal, from what it was in the period of the six preceding seals, the vision contained in this seventh chapter, is thrown in between the end of the sixth and the opening of the seventh seal, as a kind of interlude, in order to give us a comprehensive view of the state of the Christian church

church during the approaching period of the seventh seal, and to prepare Christians for the new kinds of trials to which they should be exposed in that period.

This vision John saw, "after these things." This vision refers to events, which were to take place in regular succession after those predicted under the six seals in the preceding chapter. And, consequently, the first of them was to commence immediately after the establishment of the Christian church in the Roman empire, at the revolution under Constantine the Great.

John saw four angels, standing on the four corners of the earth. An angel, as was formerly shewn, signifies any messenger of God commissioned to execute any of his purposes, in the government of the world, whether that messenger be one of the heavenly spirits, one of the sons of men, or a particular event in the course of divine providence. In this vision, they appear to be four men.

They stand on the four corners of the earth; that is, their influence shall extend over every corner of the Roman empire. And in particular, they shall hold the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. By this hieroglyphic, it is predicted, that these four men shall be the instruments, in the hand of God, for preserving an universal calm and peace over the whole empire.

As

As the earth signifies the Roman empire, so the sea, in the symbolical language, signifies a fluctuating and dissolved state of government. It signifies a multitude of people like the drops of water, which make up the sea, but like these drops not connected together, but easily dissolved, fluctuating, and frequently changing their places. We meet with this symbol, chap. x. 2. and xiii. 1. In both which places, it signifies a dissolved and fluctuating state of civil government, as shall be shewn, in the commentary on them, particularly on the last of them. This symbol is used to signify the same thing by Daniel, chap. vii. 2, 3. In this verse, it signifies, that though the Roman empire seemed to be dissolved, as every government is, when a revolution is taking place in it; these four men should be the instruments of bringing about and preserving a profound peace and calm in the empire, notwithstanding the late dissolved state of government.

Trees are the produce of the earth, hence they signify the temporal interests of the Roman empire. The same symbol occurs, chap. ix. 14. and there has the same signification. This peace shall be so great, that none of the temporal interests of the empire shall be hurt during its continuance. This prediction was exactly fulfilled in that period of the history of the Roman empire, and of the Christian church, which immediately followed the
 revolution

revolution that took place in both under Constantine. The profound and universal peace and calm, which took place in the Roman empire, and among Christians, commenced in the year 325, when Constantine the Great became sole emperor of Rome and terminated in the year 340, when the civil war broke out between Constantine the Second, and Constans, two of the sons of Constantine. The four angels who were the instruments, under God, of preserving this calm and peace, were Constantine the Great, who reigned over the whole empire from the year 325 to the year 337, and his three sons, Constantine the Second, Constantius, and Constans, who together ruled over the whole empire, each of the three having his own particular division of it, till the year 340, when Constantine the Second lost his life. The history of these events will fall more properly to be produced in the commentary on the two following verses, in which some other striking circumstances, in the history of these four persons (angels) are predicted.

Verses 2d, 3d.—And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God : and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have

have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

John, at the same time, saw another angel ascending from the east. This other angel was Christ, as shall be shewn, after the other symbols contained in these two verses are explained.—Christ had in his hand the seal of the living God. Paul gives an exact and full description of the seal of God, in 2 Tim. ii. 19. “Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this *seal*, “The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let “every one, that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity.”

He was going to seal the servants of God in their foreheads, with this seal. When the slaves, the cattle, or any of the property of men are in danger of being lost, they impress their particular mark or seal upon them, by which they may know them to be theirs, wherever they may be scattered, or however much they may be mixed with those which belong to other persons. The servants of God are true Christians, those who regulate their faith, worship, and obedience, by the commands of God, and not by the commandments of men taught as doctrines. The application of this seal to Christians, signifies a situation and time of danger, in which they shall be so mixed among the servants of men, and of Satan, that this seal of God shall be
necessary

necessary to distinguish them from, and to keep them from being lost among them.

The seal of the living God hath two inscriptions upon it, which at once mark the real character of every true Christian, and hinder him from being lost from among the sheep of God, however long and far he hath wandered in the wilderness. The first is, "The Lord knoweth them that are his servants." There never was, there is not, and there never shall be, one single true servant of God, whom the Lord does not perfectly know to be his. Their characters may be mistaken, or misrepresented by men, but whether they live in the bustle of active life, or in the most lonely retirement; whether they are of high rank, or are destined to move in the lowest ranks of life; whether they are the citizens of this country, or the slaves of that; whether they live within the pale of this or that particular church, the Lord will never mistake their true character, overlook one of them, nor claim as his own any one who is not his in reality, and on whom this mark is not to be found. The second is, "And let every one that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity." They all rightly believe in Christ: They entertain those just views of him which correspond to his real natures and character, and to the account given of him in scripture; and they openly profess that faith. They gradually depart farther and farther, not

VOL. I. F f from

from this or that particular vice only, but from every thing that is iniquity or sin. They believe in Christ, and their faith does not make them continue in sin, but on the contrary, it makes them depart from iniquity. They depart from iniquity, and their good works instead of superseding, flow from and strengthen their faith in Christ. They make perpetual progress in holiness in this world, but they arrive not at spotless perfection in it; for while they are on this side of the grave, they still feel some evil in themselves from which they depart. By the former mark their salvation is sure. None can be finally lost, whom the Lord knows to be his. It is not possible to deceive the elect to their final destruction. By the latter, they are prepared for heaven, they may derive comfort to themselves in this world, and in many instances, may be known to be the servants of God by the discerning part of mankind. Through faith in Christ, their iniquities are forgiven; by departing from iniquity, they are made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. From perceiving that in their own character, faith in Christ is connected with a gradual departure from iniquity, they have the best grounds to trust that they are of the number of those whom the Lord knows to be his servants. By connecting faith in Christ with holiness of life, and such a holiness, too, as fully proves the necessity of a Saviour, and clothes them with humility, since
they

they still feel some evil in them from which to depart, and by connecting holiness of life with faith in Christ, they afford the most unequivocal proof to the discerning part of mankind that they are the servants of God.

These servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. They are not ashamed of their master, nor afraid to profess themselves his worshippers and servants. Their sacred regard to the commands of God, their firm faith in Christ, and their improving holiness of life, distinguish them from the men of the world, the slaves of sin and Satan.

It was given to the four angels to hurt the earth and the sea. It is thus predicted, that Constantine and his three sons, who should preserve so profound a peace in the Roman empire, should soon after hurt the empire, and draw much evil upon it out of the late revolution. But they are prohibited from hurting the earth, till Christ should have sealed the servants of God. By this part of the hieroglyphic, the commencement of the period, when the Christian church should be represented by the sealed servants of God, is marked.---It should be in that time, when the short calm in the empire under Constantine and his three sons, should happen, that is, between the years 325 and 340. The termination of the period is fixed, as shall appear in the commentary on the 9th, and some following verses of this chapter, to the commencement of the mille-

nium state of the church, which, in its proper place, shall be shewn to be the year of Christ 2000.

The account given of the angel ascending from the east, in the verses now under our view, accords to none but Christ, and exactly corresponds to him, whereby it is evident that this angel is Christ. He ascends from the east. Christ first appeared in the east, in the land of Judea, and from thence the knowledge of him and his religion travelled to the western parts of the world. He commands the other four angels. There is no intimation of any power delegated to him; whilst they evidently act in consequence of a delegated power: "to whom it was *given* to hurt the earth and the sea." He, as supreme Lord and Governor of the world, commands; and they, as inferior agents, act so far as they are commanded, permitted, and empowered. Even when Christ appeared in human nature, his character as the divine Governor of the world, was marked by giving his commands, not from a delegated, but from an inherent, proper, and supreme power. It was thus, that the manner in which he performed his miracles, was distinguished from that in which the prophets and apostles wrought theirs. "He seals the servants of God!" Who, except Christ, could know all those who are the servants of God, who really do believe in him, and who are careful to depart from iniquity? Such knowledge

knowledge surpasses all angelic, all created faculties, and accords to divine perfections only.

From the history of the Christian church, and of the Roman empire, it clearly appears, that Constantine and his three sons, who were the four emperors, who preserved the universal calm and peace in the empire, were the very four to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, and who, in fact, disturbed the peace of the Roman empire, and of the Christian church. By his well intended, but ill-judged munificence to the Christian church, and by those alterations in its government, by which he brought it to a nearer resemblance to the civil constitution of the state, Constantine the Great, laid the foundation of all that huge superstructure of the Roman hierarchy, which was piled up under his successors, and of all those religious contests, by which the peace of the church and of the empire was so often disturbed. The three sons of Constantine, afraid of the brothers and nephews of the late emperor, and dissatisfied with their own shares of the empire, soon disturbed the empire with hot civil wars, and bloody massacres. These facts are fully authenticated by Mosheim, *Hist.* Vol. i. pages 170, 171. "After the death of
"Constantine, which happened in the year 337,
"his three sons, Constantine Second, Constantius,
"and Constans, were, in consequence of his appointment, put in possession of the empire,
"and

“ and were all saluted emperors and Augusti by
“ the Roman senate. There were yet living two
“ brothers of the late emperor, viz. Constantius
“ Dalmatius, and Julius Constantius, and they had
“ several sons. These, the sons of Constantine or-
“ dered to be put to death, lest their ambitious
“ views should excite troubles in the empire, and
“ they all fell victims to this barbarous order, ex-
“ cept Gallus and Julian, the sons of Julius Con-
“ stantius, the latter of whom rose afterwards to the
“ imperial dignity. The dominions allotted to
“ Constantine, were Britain, Gaul, and Spain ; but
“ he did not possess them long, for having made
“ himself master, by force, of several places belong-
“ ing to Constans, this occasioned a war between
“ the two brothers, in the year 340, in which Con-
“ stantine lost his life. Constans, who had receiv-
“ ed, at first, for his portion, Illyricum, Italy, and
“ Africa, added now the dominions of the deceas-
“ ed prince to his own, and thus became sole mas-
“ ter of all the western provinces. He remained in
“ possession of this vast territory, until the year
“ 350, when he was cruelly assassinated by the or-
“ ders of Magnentius, who had revolted, and declar-
“ ed himself emperor. Magnentius, in his turn met
“ with the fate he deserved ; transported with rage
“ and despair at his ill success in the war against
“ Constantius, and apprehending the most terrible
“ and ignominious death from the just resentment
“ of

“ of the conqueror, he laid violent hands upon
“ himself. Thus Constantius, who had before this
“ possessed the provinces of Asia, Syria, and Egypt,
“ became in the year 353 sole lord of the Roman
“ empire, which he ruled until the year 361, when he
“ died at Mopsuerne, on the borders of Cilicia, as he
“ was marching against Julian. None of these three
“ brothers possessed the spirit and genius of their
“ father. They all indeed followed his example
“ continuing to abrogate and efface the antient su-
“ perstitions of the Romans, and other idolatrous
“ nations, and to accelerate the progress of the
“ Christian religion through the empire.”

Pages 181, 182. “ The rights and privileges of
“ the several ecclesiastical orders were, however,
“ gradually changed and diminished from the
“ time that the church began to be torn with divi-
“ sions, and agitated with those violent dissensions
“ and tumults, to which the election of bishops, the
“ diversity of religious opinions, and other things
“ of a like nature, too frequently gave rise. In
“ these religious quarrels, the weaker generally
“ fled to the court for protection and succour, and
“ thereby furnished the emperors with a favourable
“ opportunity of setting limits to the power of the
“ bishops, of infringing the liberties of the people,
“ and of modifying in various ways, the antient
“ customs according to their pleasure, And in-
“ deed, even the bishops themselves, whose opu-
lence

“ lence and authority were considerably increas-
“ ed since the time of Constantine, began to in-
“ troduce gradually innovations into the forms
“ of ecclesiastical discipline, and to change the
“ government of the church. The first step was,
“ an entire exclusion of the people from all
“ parts in the administration of ecclesiastical af-
“ fairs; and afterwards they; by degrees, divest-
“ ed even the presbyters of their antient privi-
“ leges and primitive authority, that they might
“ have no importunate protesters to controul their
“ ambition, or oppose their proceedings; and prin-
“ cipally, that they might either ingross to them-
“ selves, or distribute as they thought proper the
“ possessions and revenues of the church. Hence
“ it came to pass, that at the conclusion of this cen-
“ tury, (the 4th), there remained no more than a
“ mere shadow of the antient government of the
“ church. Many of the privileges, which had
“ formerly belonged to the presbyters and people,
“ were usurped by the bishops; and many of the
“ rights which had been formerly vested in the u-
“ niversal church, were transferred to the empe-
“ rors, and subordinate officers and magistrates.

Page 182. parag. 3. “ Constantine the Great, in
“ order to prevent civil commotions, and to fix his
“ authority upon solid and stable foundations,
“ made several changes, not only in the laws of
“ the empire, but also in the form of the Roman
government.

" government. And, as there were many important reasons which induced him to suit the administration of the church to these changes in the civil constitution, this necessarily introduced among the bishops new degrees of eminence and rank." Then to the end of that paragraph are enumerated the various ranks introduced among the clergy at this time, viz. Patriarchs, Exarchs, Archbishops, &c.

Pages 296, 297. " No sooner had Constantine the Great abolished the superstitions of his ancestors, than magnificent churches were every where erected for the Christians, which were richly adorned with pictures and images, and bore a striking resemblance of the Pagan temples, both in their outward and inward form. Of these churches, some were built over the tombs of martyrs, and were frequented only at stated times, while others were set apart for the ordinary assemblies of Christians in divine worship. The former were called Martyria, from the places where they were erected, and the latter Tituli. Both of them were consecrated with great pomp, and with certain rules borrowed mostly from the antient laws of the Roman pontiffs. But our wonder will not cease here, it will rather be augmented, when we learn, that at this time, it was looked upon as an essential part of religion to have in every country a

“ multitude of churches ; and hence the true and
“ only origin of what is called the *right of patro-*
“ *nage*, which was introduced among Christians
“ with no other view, than to encourage the opu-
“ lent to erect a great number of churches, by giv-
“ ing them the privilege of appointing the minis-
“ ters that were to officiate in them. This was a
“ new instance of that servile imitation of the an-
“ tient superstitions which reigned at this time ; for
“ it was a very common notion among the people
“ of old, that nations and provinces were happy
“ and free from danger, in proportion to the num-
“ ber of fanes and temples which they consecrat-
“ ed to the worship of gods and heroes, whose pro-
“ tection and succour could not fail, as it was
“ thought, to be shed abundantly upon those who
“ worshipped them with such zeal, and honoured
“ them with so many marks of veneration and ref-
“ spect. The Christians unhappily contracted the
“ same erroneous way of thinking. The greater
“ the number of temples was, which they erected
“ in honour of Christ and his chosen friends and
“ followers, the more sanguine did their expect-
“ tations grow of powerful succours from them, and
“ of a peculiar interest in the divine protection.
“ They were so weak as to imagine, that God,
“ Christ, and celestial intelligences, were delighted
“ with those marks and testimonies of respect, which
“ captivate the hearts of wretched mortals.”

Verset

Verses 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th.—And I heard the number of them which were sealed ; and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel. Of the tribe of Judah were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Reuben were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Gad were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Aser were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Simeon were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Zabulun were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph were sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin were sealed twelve thousand.

In these verses, we have an account of the servants of God who were sealed. They are said to be of the twelve tribes of Israel. Israel was of old the people or church of God. During the time that Israel was the church of God, the limits of his church were comparatively very contracted.

Hence, Israel is the symbol for the Christian church during its comparatively contracted state, previous to the millennium state, when Jew and Gentile shall be brought into the Christian church, and when all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, Rom. ix. 6. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." Rom. xxviii. 29. "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly."

That these twelve tribes, do not here signify literally the twelve tribes of Israel, but symbolically Christian churches, appears not only from the language of prophecy, which is symbolical; not only from the connection of the following and preceding parts of this vision; but also from this circumstance, that the twelve tribes, enumerated in these verses, do not correspond, either in all the particular tribes, or in the arrangement of them, to the twelve tribes of Israel, among whom the land of Canaan was divided. In that partition, Reuben was named first, because he was the oldest. Here Judah is named first, because the tribes of Israel represent Christian churches, and Christ, their head, and from whom they derive the name of Christian, came of the tribe of Judah. In the partition of the land of Canaan, Levi had no portion, excepting only the Levitical cities and their suburbs, because Levi was to wait on the altar, and to live by the altar.

But

But here Levi is mentioned as a tribe, because the Levites, or priests under the law, are the proper symbolical representatives of Christians, who are denominated priests unto God, and who look not for a temporal, but a spiritual inheritance.

As the two sons of Joseph were ranked among the tribes of Israel, in place of their father, and as Levi is mentioned here, there would have been thirteen tribes, if one of the antient tribes of Israel had not been omitted in the verses now under our view : But the tribe of Dan is omitted here. And the leaving out of this particular tribe, serves still farther to confirm the interpretation given of this symbol. For Dan very early went in quest of a worldly inheritance, out of his proper district ; and apostatised to idolatry, as is narrated, with many particular and striking circumstances, throughout the whole xviii. chapter of the book of Judges. He was therefore an improper representative of a Christian church, and rather a representative of an Antichristian one, by his fondness for a worldly inheritance, and his proneness to idolatry. Of all the tribes of Israel, only one is omitted ; and that one had apostatised to idolatry. And though there are some servants of God sealed in every one of the other twelve tribes, no whole tribe is sealed.

Twelve thousand are sealed out of every tribe. We are not to imagine, that the exact same number of individuals shall be sealed in every tribe or Chris-

tian

tian church ; nor that the precise number of twelve thousand shall be sealed in any one of them. That number, like the other parts of the hieroglyphic, is symbolical. It is made up of the number twelve multiplied into a thousand. Twelve is taken from the twelve apostles, on whose doctrines the Christian church is built ; and the thousand is taken from the thousand years, in which the servants of God shall reign with Christ on earth, chap. xx. 4. 6. which is the millenium state of the church. Hence the twelve thousand sealed ones are all those individual Christians in every particular church, whose religion is modelled on the doctrines of the apostles, of Jesus, who, in some degree, resemble the purity of the worshippers of God in the millenium state, and also in the internal joys of religion, in some degree partake of their happiness. They are those persons, who under God, are the instruments, in every preceding age, of bringing about that state. Accordingly, when the millennium state is introduced in this book, these sealed ones again appear in the precise same number of 144000, chap. xiv. 1. And in chap. xxi. 16, 17. the dimensions of the walls and city of the new Jerusalem, the symbol of the millennium state, is made up of the same numbers, and refers to the same persons, as shall be shewn in the commentary.

These 144000 sealed servants of God, out of the twelve tribes, signify, that from the time in which
Christianity

Christianity was established by law, in the fourth century, to the commencement of the millennium, in the year of Christ 2000, the true church of Christ on earth, shall not be any one constituted church visible to the world; but shall consist of many individual Christians, whom the Lord knows to be his servants, and who naming the name of Christ, depart from iniquity, in many different churches. That this is the real state of the church of Christ during that period, is evident from some following visions, as shall be shewn in the commentary upon them.

Not only is the general number of all the sealed ones mentioned; but also, the particular number of those who were sealed in each tribe. By this minuteness it is intimated, that not one real Christian shall escape the notice of God, and that the providence and grace of God shall not be wanting to a single one of them.

This representation of the church of Christ during this period, exactly corresponds to what every candid and intelligent observer of what passes in the world, must perceive to be in fact the state of the Christian church during this time. Since the days of Constantine, where has there been a visible constituted church, modelled in every part upon the divine standard of inspired scripture? Since the first three centuries of the Christian æra, no such visible constituted church hath appeared;
and

and the world hath no reason to hope to see another such, until the millennium, when the kingdom of God shall come, and his will shall be done on earth, as it is in heaven. And where is the Christian church, built upon the foundation laid by Christ and his apostles, though the whole superstructure is not, in every part, executed upon the divine plan, in which there are not many individual true Christians, many honest and good men, many whom the Lord knows to be his servants, and who name the name of Christ, and depart from iniquity?

Let this situation of the church of Christ give a check to bigotry, and let it teach us mutual charity and forbearance. Let us divest ourselves of that bigotry, which makes some men consider none as Christians, except those, who are members of the same church or sect with themselves. While such men say, "I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of "Cephas," let us say, we are of Christ. And let us love with brotherly affection, all who in sincerity love our Lord Jesus Christ; though they and we may be members of very differently constituted churches. Let the imperfections, which are to be found in every constituted church, teach mutual forbearance to them all. Let the many wise and good individuals, which are to be found in every one of them; teach us mutual charity and brotherly affection. Let us esteem and love every good man.

man. Let us regard as the sealed servants of God, all whom the Lord knows to be his, all who name the name of Christ, and depart from iniquity, so far as we can know them to be such, in whatever constituted church they worship and serve God. Let the many imperfections which still cleave to every constituted church in the world, and on account of which there are so many opposing churches and sects in it, make us look back with respect on the grand simplicity of the Apostolic church; and forward with hope and exultation to that glorious period, when in this world there shall be one fold and one shepherd; when all jarring and contending churches and sects, not even the Jewish one excepted, having become of one faith, one heart, and one way, shall be included in one pure universal, and triumphant church.

Verses 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th.—After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and *about* the elders,

and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.

This second part of the third vision represents an enlarged and glorious state of the Christian church, which shall succeed immediately to the preceding one represented by the sealed servants of God. Through the whole of this book the close succession of one event to another is always expressed by this phrase "After these things," as in verse 1st. "After this," as in this verse,

In this hieroglyphic the servants of God are not represented as scattered individuals known to God in each tribe of Israel ; but as a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. They are not merely known to God ; but they publicly stand before, that is, worship God and Christ. They are visible by their garb, their white robes. They are no longer in a persecuted state, or in a state of warfare ; but they are in a state of victory and triumph ; for they have palms in their hands, the symbols of victory and triumph, and the songs which they sing are expressions of triumph. They ascribe their deliverance from, and victory over
all

all their enemies to the providence of God and the grace of Christ. Then also all the angels, that is, not merely the heavenly intelligences, but also all the events in the providence of God by which this glorious revolution in the church of Christ hath been brought about, shall illustriously display and sing the glory of the divine perfections, especially as exerted in the moral government of the world. At that glorious period it shall be fully manifested, that all these events in providence received their direction from God, were brought to pass chiefly for the good of the Christian church; and that every one of them obeyed the divine appointment.

This glorious period shall commence about the year of Christ 2000, and shall continue for a thousand years. It is particularly predicted and described in chapters xx, xxi, and xxii. It is unnecessary, and perhaps improper, to explain that period more fully in this place. For the vision in this chapter is only the general introduction, in prophetic language, to the two states of the Christian church, more fully predicted and described in the following parts of this book. The first part of the vision, that of the sealed servants of God, is the introduction to the persecuted and militant state of the church, which is fully predicted in chapters viii, ix, xi, xii. and xiii. And the second part, of the innumerable multitude of all nations with palms in their hands, is the introduction to the en-

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larged,

larged, pure, glorious, and triumphant state of the church for a thousand years on earth, which is predicted and described in chap. xx, xxi, and xxii. The commentary upon an introduction, like an introduction itself, ought to be general.

Verses 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th.—And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

One of the elders is introduced to explain to John who are the persons represented by the innumera-
ble

ble multitude clothed in white robes, mentioned in verse 9th. Such explanations are frequent in all prophetic writings, as keys to open them.— They are commonly made by some person who had appeared in a former vision, or in a former part of the same vision, who is introduced again for the purpose of explaining that part which is dark. We frequently meet with such persons in the prophecies of Daniel and Ezekiel, and also in this book. These persons may be considered as a part of the scenery of the vision. This person is one of the twenty-four elders who sat around the throne of God, and who are the representatives of the people in the Christian church. In chap. v. 5. one of these elders is also introduced, to give a piece of very important information. Probably there is something more than the mere scenery in the introduction of one of the elders in both these places. It seems to imply also in it, that in many of those things which are dark, many private Christians are fully as ready as even the ministers of the gospel are, to understand the mysteries, and to trust in the promises of the gospel. Fact, I believe, hath often verified this observation; and if it were for edification, many good reasons might be assigned why it is so.

The elder informs John, that these clothed in white robes are those who had come out of great tribulation. This the Christian church may well
be

be said to have done, when that happy period shall come, when after all her long and cruel sufferings under Heathen and under Papal Rome, she shall enjoy, as a church, a state of great peace, purity, and triumph after the fall of Papal Rome.

“Their robes are made white in the blood of the “Lamb.” White robes are the clothing of martyrs, chap. vi. 11. White linen is the righteousness of saints, chap. xix. 8. That righteousness is of two kinds. First, the righteousness of justification, by which the guilt of their sins is expiated, and they are delivered from those punishments which are due to them for their sins, as offences against God their righteous Sovereign. And second, the righteousness of sanctification, by which they are recovered from the depravity of sin, their nature is renewed after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, and at last perfected; and they are freed from those internal miseries, which are the natural consequences of moral depravity, and are qualified for enjoying in every stage of their existence, that happiness which accords to human nature in its rectitude, and always in a degree proportioned to the degree of their approach to that rectitude. These two kinds of righteousness are inseparable in the character of every saint of God. There never was a saint of God who was not both justified and sanctified. A sinner who is not justified must be condemned. And an
unsanctified

unsanctified saint is a perfect contradiction in terms, Rom. viii. 1. "There is no condemnation "to them who are in Christ Jesus." But then "they "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," Titus ii. 11,—12. "The grace of God, which "brings salvation, teaches us to deny ungodliness "and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, "and godly, in this present world," Rom. vi. 1, 2. "What shall we say then? shall we continue in "sin, that grace may abound? God forbid: how "shall we that are dead to sin live any longer "therein?" Both these kinds of righteousness are necessary for the enjoyment of happiness. Without the former, man would be liable to the punishments which divine justice would inflict upon him as a sinner against God. Without the latter, he would want the mental senses in their proper state, for perceiving and enjoying the proper objects of human happiness. Both these kinds of righteousness the saints derive from the blood of Christ. It is by the atonement which he offered, when he shed his blood on the cross, and died the just for the unjust, that he might bring them unto God, that he expiated their guilt, and took away their sins, by the one sacrifice of himself. It is by the agency of his Spirit, the obedience of his precepts, the observance of his ordinances, and the belief of his doctrines, particularly the doctrine of that great atonement for sin, which he made by his blood,

blood, that the internal righteousness of sanctification is begun, carried on and perfected in them, 1 Corin. i. 30. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus; who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. verse 31. "That according as it is written, He that "glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

They serve God in his temple. The tabernacle was the stated place of public worship among the Jews, so long as they were in the wilderness, and in an unsettled state; and the temple was the stated place of public worship among them, when they were settled in the land of Canaan. Hence the tabernacle is the symbol for the church of Christ in its persecuted, unsettled, and wilderness state, chap. xiii. 6. And the temple is that for the church of Christ in the state of purity, victory, and establishment to which it shall be raised during the thousand years mentioned in chap. xx. It is thus used chap. xi. 19. and xv. 8. This expression therefore is a plain declaration, that this part of this vision refers to that glorious state of the church of Christ. The same is predicted by all the following expressions. The substance of all which expressions, and many of the very same words we meet with in the description of that state, chap. xxi. 24. and xxii. 1, 2. to the commentary on which passages the reader is referred.

C H A P.

C H A P. VIII.

VISION III.

Verse 1st. **A**ND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

The sixth seal, opened in chap. vi. 12,—17. predicted the revolution, which took place in the Roman empire, and in the Christian church in the days of Constantine the Great, and brought the historical events down to the year of Christ 325. What is contained in chap. vii. is only an introduction to what follows in this book, and therefore takes up no time in the historical events. Hence the events predicted under the seventh seal, must commence at the time in which those predicted under the sixth one ended, which was the year 325. The opening of the seventh seal introduces the seven trumpets. Indeed the opening of that seal lays open all the subsequent part of the sealed book of Daniel's prophecies.

The book or roll which the Lamb opened was sealed with seven seals. As the first six seals have been opened already, when the seventh is opened, the whole book is laid open. Accordingly this part of the book, which was contained between the seventh seal and the end of it, is called an opened book in chap. x. 1, 2. as shall be shewn in the commentary; and it is represented in that chapter as containing all the subsequent prophecies, which are drawn out at full length in this book.

Here heaven is the symbol for the church of Christ. It was formerly shewn upon what principles it is that earth is the symbol for the Roman empire, and heaven for the church of Christ. By this symbol, the church of Christ is not only signified in this prophetic book, but also very frequently in other parts of the New Testament, Matth. iii. 2. In the 13th chapter of Matthew's gospel, the church of Christ is stiled the kingdom of heaven no less than seven times. Sometimes in this book heaven is used, not symbolically but literally, for the heavenly state or eternal mansions of perfect and perpetual purity and bliss. When it signifies that state, and when it signifies the church of Christ on earth is as easily and clearly known in this book from the context, as it is in other parts of the New Testament, when the term kingdom of heaven signifies the one of these states, and when it signifies the other. Hence, by silence in heaven for about

bout half an hour, is signified a very short time of peace and calm in the church of Christ. A day is the symbol for an year, as shall be shewn when that symbol occurs. Upon the principle of that symbol, half an hour would be the symbol for a week. But here the time is not determinate and precise, it is not said *for half an hour*, but *about the space of half an hour*; hence, without fixing the time precisely, this symbol represents it as very short.

In the beginning of the preceding chapter a calm in the *earth*, the Roman empire, was predicted. In this verse a calm, but a very short one in *heaven*, the Christian church, is predicted. This short silence is said to be in the church, because the peace and calm was to be shorter in the church than that which was to be in the empire; and also because the disturbances and contentions by which this silence was to be interrupted, and which are predicted by the first trumpet, are of a religious kind, and in the church. This silence, or calm in the church, took place when Constantine the Great, on the death of Licinius, became sole emperor, and established Christianity in the empire in the year 325. But that calm was very short. For in that very year the Arian heresy so much disturbed the church, that the emperor was obliged to call the council of Nice, in order to put an end to these

religious heats and contentions, which this council attempted in vain.

Verse 21.—And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and to them were given seven trumpets.

When the seventh seal was opened, the whole of the roll or book from that seal to the end of it was rolled off: and John saw drawn upon it seven angels with seven trumpets, who introduce all the following predictions in this book, as shall appear as we proceed.

The seven angels to whom the seven trumpets are given, signify the seven dispensations of divine providence, predicted by the seven trumpets. A trumpet is intended for sounding an alarm, and giving warning of approaching danger. This use of the trumpet is universally known, frequently occurs in scripture, and is particularly mentioned in Ezekiel xxxiii. 2,—4. “Son of man speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, “when I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for a watchman. If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning,

"warning, if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head." Hence a trumpet is the symbol of a public warning or alarm given to a people by their watchman.

These angels stood before God, received their instructions from him, and consequently were the watchmen for the sealed servants of God. Therefore all the seven trumpets signify seven great and striking dispensations of divine providence, intended to give warning to the people of God of the various dangers, arising from the corruptions of religion, to which they should be exposed during a period which commenced in the year 325, and shall terminate in the year 2000; at which last year their dangers shall end, and their triumphs shall commence.

Verses 3d, 4th — And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angels hands.

This

This angel perfumes with incense the prayers of all saints, and presents them unto God. This is the peculiar office of Christ as the High Priest, the Intercessor and Advocate of his people with God the Father. He offers incense with the prayers of *all saints*; but none, except a divine person, can know all without exception, who are saints. Hence this Angel is Christ, who, as their Intercessor and Advocate with the Father, presents the prayers of all true Christians before the throne of God. And these prayers when presented by Christ are acceptable to God. 1 Tim. ii. 5. "There is one God" and one Mediator between God and man, the man "Christ Jesus." Heb. vii. 25. "Wherefore he is able also to save them, unto the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

The trumpets are about to open up most alarming, ensnaring, and dangerous dispensations to Christians in those great and deep floods of errors, which were to be let loose upon the world by the Papal hierarchy, and by Mahomet. When we consider the art, the authority, and power of these two arch deceivers, we are apt to exclaim, that if possible they would deceive the very elect. In this situation Christ is represented as interceding in heaven for every saint on earth, without one single exception; and it is declared by this hieroglyphic, that, by their prayers,

ers, presented to God by him as their Intercessor, they shall be preserved, supported, and directed under that long train of trials. As Christ said to Peter when he was about to meet with a great trial, he says here to all his saints when about to enter on the long train of trials predicted under the seven trumpets, Luke xxii. 31, 32. "Behold "Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift "you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that "thy faith fail not."

Verses 5th. 6th.—And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound.

Fire cast upon the earth signifies a flame, or hot contention which was to be kindled in the Roman empire. This contention was to be of the religious kind; for the fire by which it was to be kindled was taken from the altar. This fire was taken from the altar, and was thrown upon the earth by the same angel, who in verse 3d offered incense with the prayers of all saints, to intimate to us, that no flame or contention can arise in the world, or in the church,

church, without the knowledge and permission of Christ, and that it cannot burn to a greater extent or height than he is pleased to permit it. This flame was to kindle up events, which like the voice of God in the awful dispensations of his providence ought to alarm and warn mankind, particularly by the saints. Events which should appear in thundering and lightnings, that is, in violent contentions, quarrels, and wars; and in an earthquake, that is, in a revolution. There are voices, thunderings, and lightnings, to shew, that during this period there shall be many warnings, contentions, and wars. But there is only one earthquake, to shew that that period shall be closed with a great revolution. That such shall be the case shall appear in the commentary on the seven trumpets. Just when the religious flame was beginning to burn in the empire, the first of the dispensations predicted by the trumpets was approaching, and the rest were to follow in succession.

Verse 7th—The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

The

The first event in the course of divine providence by which Christians shall be warned of their dangers, and of the corruptions which were coming upon the world, should be a violent and hot contention, expressed by the symbols of hail and fire. This contention, though of a religious kind, should be attended with bloodshed, for the hail and the fire were mingled with blood. This violent, hot, and bloody religious contention was to rage in the Roman empire, for the hail, fire, and blood were cast upon the earth. Though the contentions should be of a religious kind, yet the empire should be as much engaged in them and disturbed by them as the church should be. By this storm nothing was to be hurt but the trees and green grafs.

In the symbolical language, we frequently meet with trees, grafs, seas, rivers, sun, moon, and stars. All these terms occur in this and the five following verses. When any of these symbols are used, they always signify something which bears the same relation to the system treated of that these things themselves do to this solar system, of which this earth is a part. For instance, if the system treated of is the Papal hierarchy, all these terms have a reference to it. In this sense they are all used in chap. xvi. If again the system which is treated of is the Christian church, which is the case here under the trumpets, then all these terms

have a reference to that system. The trees and the grass signify something in the Christian church, which resemble trees and grass on the earth. The same observation applies to the seas, rivers, the sun, moon, and stars. This mode of expression is not peculiar to the symbolical language, it is common to it with all other kinds of language. If a person inhabiting this earth mentions the sun, every person hearing him immediately understands it to be that sun which is the center of this solar system, and never imagines that he is speaking of some one of the fixed stars, as the sun and center of some other system. If he speaks of the moon, every one understands it to be the moon which is a satellite of this earth, and not one of another planet. If a person writing of the kingdom of Britain mentions the king, every one understands the king of Britain and no other king; but if another writing of the kingdom of France mentions the king, every one understands the king of France and no other king.

As this storm was to destroy a third part of the trees and of the green grass, it was to do very considerable hurt to the Christian church, and to spoil its beauty. But it was not to do so much hurt to it as would have been done to it, had its fountains, rivers, and seas been rendered unfit for drink, to be sailed on, or to nourish the fishes, or had its sun, moon, and stars been darkened. As trees and
green

green grafs are both very ornamental and useful upon the earth, hence by the burning of the third part of the trees and grafs, is predicted, that this religious contention should spoil the church of much of her beauty, and of many things of great advantage to Christians. The prediction by this hieroglyphic was exactly fulfilled in the rise of the Arian heresy, and in the hot and even bloody contentions which for a long time were kept up in the church and in the empire, by this heresy. This heresy denying the divinity of Christ, was first broached in the reign of Constantine the Great, by Arius a presbyter of Alexandria. It soon obtained many powerful votaries, and occasioned such violent contentions in the church and empire, that Constantine the Great was obliged to assemble the famous council of Nice in Bythinia, in the year 325, in order to put an end to this controversy. In this council, after many keen debates and violent efforts of the two parties, Arius was condemned, and Christ was declared to be consubstantial, (*ὁμοουσιος*), or of the same essence with the Father; the vanquished presbyter was banished among the Illyrians, and his followers were compelled to give their assent to the creed or confession of faith composed by this council.

The council of Nice did not put an end to this heresy, as was expected. On the contrary, this controversy threw the church into hot, violent,

and bloody contentions, for the space of near two hundred years. During that time, the church always rejected Arianism; but sometimes the votaries of the Nicene creed, and at other times those of Arianism had the support of the empire. The party who had the countenance of the state at the time, persecuted and banished the other. The history of the 4th, 5th, and 6th centuries is full of the violent contentions in the church and the empire, excited by Arianism. Thus Mosheim, *Hist.* Vol. i. page 218, "But notwithstanding all these determinations, the commotions excited by this controversy remained yet in the minds of many, and the spirit of dissention and controversy triumphed both over the decrees of the council, and the authority of the emperor."

Page 220. "After the death of Constantine the Great, one of his sons, Constantius, who in the division of the empire, became ruler of the east, was warmly attached to the Arian party, whose principles were also zealously adopted by the empress, and indeed by the whole court. On the other hand, Constantine and Constans emperors of the west maintained the decrees of the council of Nice, throughout all the provinces where their jurisdiction extended. Hence arose endless animosities and seditions, treacherous plots, and open acts of injustice and violence between the two contending parties. Council was assembled against

“ gainst council, and their jarring and contradic-
“ ting decrees spread perplexity and confusion
“ throughout the Christian world. In the year
“ 350 Constans was assassinated, and about two
“ years after this, a great part of the western em-
“ pire, particularly Rome and Italy fell into the
“ hands of his brother Constantius. This change
“ was extremely unfavourable to those who ad-
“ hered to the decrees of the council of Nice. The
“ emperor’s attachment to the Arians animated
“ him against their adversaries, whom he involved
“ in various troubles and calamities, and obliged
“ many of them by threats and punishments, to
“ come over to the sect which he esteemed and
“ protected. Among these forced proselytes was
“ Liberius the Roman pontiff, who was compelled
“ to embrace Arianism in the year 357. The Ni-
“ cene party meditated reprisals, and waited on-
“ ly a convenient time, a fit place, and a proper
“ occasion for executing their resentment. Thus,
“ the history of the church under Constantius pre-
“ sents to the reader a perpetual scene of tumult
“ and violence, and the deplorable spectacle of a
“ war carried on between brothers, without reli-
“ gion, justice, or humanity.”

Pages 220, 221. parag. 15. “Theodosius the
“ Great raised the secular arm against the Arians
“ with a terrible degree of violence, drove them
“ from their churches, enacted laws whose severi-
“ ty

ty exposed them to the
 rendered throughout
 of the council of Nice
 fition; so that the pub
 doctrine was confined
 conquered nations, for
 Goths, and Vandals.
 lent contest between the
 the attentive and im
 that unjustifiable mea
 excesses committed or
 of the Arians to mainta
 been much more preju
 they were in effect, had
 sect been divided amo
 into factions, which reg
 bitterest aversion." Of
 make mention of above fe
 ranked with great proprie
 of the Arians, Semiarians, and Eunomians.

In the 6th century, Mosheim after having de
 scribed the prosperity and the decline of Arianism,
 says *Hist.* Vol. i. page 306. "One thing however
 is certain, and that is, that from this period the
 Arian sect declined apace, and could never after
 recover any degree of stability and consistence."

If we consider either the nature of the Arian
 heresy, as a denial of the divinity of Christ, or the
 great, long, and bloody contentions which it oc
 casioned

1. *Teo. Alan &*
hisipotas 2
Arianism

2. *Genesius &*
Vandals, &
2

3. *Attila & his*
hordes in the
Europe

4. *Hesuli & Odo*
in the General
Depend Augustus
Proclamation to the
over us

casioned in the church and in the empire; ; more especially when we take both into view, it will appear an event of that magnitude which accords to the dignity of prophecy. If we compare all the circumstances of the history of Arianism with those of the prediction under this first trumpet, we must clearly perceive their most minute and wonderful agreement. This was indeed a violent, hot, and bloody storm, kindled at the altar, which fell with vengeance on the Roman empire. Though the church condemned this heresy, though none of its ordinances were corrupted by it, yet its beauty and utility were much marred by it. Christians had much reason to be alarmed, when men calling themselves Christians, Jude verse 4th, "denied the "only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ." And 2 Pet. ii. 1. "denied the Lord that bought them." When councils styling themselves Christians, passed decrees directly opposite to, and perfectly inconsistent with each other; and when even those who called themselves the votaries of the gospel of peace, avowedly persecuted for conscience sake.

Verses 8th, 9th.—And the second angel founded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire, was cast into the sea, and the third part of the sea became blood: and the third part of the creatures which were in the sea,

sea, and had life died ; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.

A mountain, because of its eminence above the surrounding vallies, is the symbol for a king. Thus the king of Babylon is represented by a mountain, Jeremiah li. 25. "Behold I am against thee, O destroying *mountain*, saith the Lord which destroyest all the earth ; Zechariah iv. 7. "Who art thou O great mountain ? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain."

This mountain is burning with fire, to signify that the king shall be furiously enraged. This burning mountain is cast into the sea ; by which the sea is so corrupted and blocked up, that a great proportion of the creatures which are in the sea die, and many of the ships which sail on it are wrecked.

Though the sea has another signification, when used individually and absolutely, as in chap. x. 2. xiii. 1. which shall be shewn in the commentary on these verses, yet when taken relatively as a part of a system, as it is here and in chap. xvi. 3. it signifies something in that system which bears such a relation to the system, and is of such use to the inhabitants of it, as the sea on this earth bears to the earth, and is of use to its inhabitants. The same observation applies in this chapter and in chap.

xvi. also to rivers, fountains of water, sun, moon, and stars. The system to which the trumpets relate, is the Christian church. Seas are of use to the inhabitants of the different countries on this earth, to import into them foreign goods and advantages, and to export to other countries the commodities which their own produce. The plain meaning of this hieroglyphic therefore is, that the second alarm which shall be given to Christians, is that, after the rise of the Arian heresy, an emperor of Rome shall deprive the Christian church of a great part of those advantages which are of a foreign kind. These, for instance, are what the church enjoys from the countenance and support of the civil magistrate, from human learning and philosophy, and from the facility with which, by means of these, it propagates those doctrines, precepts, and ordinances which are peculiarly its own, (as it were its own produce), to distant countries.

The event predicted under the first trumpet, commenced in the year 325. The one predicted under this second one, must therefore fall at some short distance of time posterior to that year.

Though the event predicted under the first trumpet commenced in the year 325, it did not terminate till the sixth century. The events predicted by the trumpets follow each other in regular

lar succession, in respect of the times of their commencement ; though, as to the times of their termination, former trumpets frequently run many years beyond the time of the commencement of following ones. This is very different from the rule of succession of the events predicted by the seals. Those predicted by every subsequent seal, always commenced after the termination of those predicted by the preceding one. The reason of this difference is evidently founded in the nature of the symbolical language. When a seal is opened, all that is contained in that part of the roll, which extends from that to the following seal, is laid open. Hence, the opening of the following one must unfold events posterior to the last of those which were contained under the preceding seal. But a trumpet is the symbol of alarm ; and an alarm is given not at the termination, but at the first appearance of danger. If therefore one alarming event commences before another, though the first should be of a much longer duration, and should not terminate so soon as the second ; yet as the alarm was first given by the one which commences first, it is predicted by the first trumpet : And if, before this event is ended, another alarming event unconnected with it commences, this is predicted by a second trumpet.

This symbolical signification of a *trumpet*, as giving an alarm at the commencement or first appearance

pearance of every new danger, even when the preceding dangers are not fully removed, is exactly correspondent to the sounds of alarm, which a watchman set to watch a city or camp gives, by blowing his trumpet. From this use of the trumpet this symbol is taken. The centinel set to watch a besieged city, upon perceiving the approach of one detachment of the enemy's forces, immediately sounds an alarm. He does not wait till that detachment have executed the purposes for which they were approaching the city. If he did, neither he nor his trumpet could be of any use to the besieged citizens.

At the first sound of his trumpet, the citizens take the alarm, many of them fall out and engage the detachment of the enemy. In the mean time, while they are engaged, the centinel perceives a second detachment of the enemy approaching the city, by another road; he blows his trumpet a second time, the citizens are roused by the second alarm, and without waiting the end of the battle between the first detachment of the enemy and their fellow citizens, a second division of them sallies out, attacks the second detachment of the enemy, and probably repulses it, before the engagement with the first division is ended. By attending to this observation, we shall perceive the reason why the events predicted by the trumpets follow each other, in respect of their commencement, not of their termination.

As we proceed, we shall find this to be uniformly the case with all the trumpets.

The alarming event to the Christians, which this second trumpet predicts, is the apostacy of the emperor Julian, and the consequences of that apostacy. In the year 381, Julian was declared sole emperor of the whole Roman empire, on the death of Constantius, the last of the sons of Constantine the Great. Though he had been educated in the principles of Christianity, he apostatized from that religion, and employed all his efforts to restore the expiring superstitions of Polytheism. He not only deprived the Christians of their civil establishment, but he also hindered them from teaching philosophy and the liberal arts, that thus he might bury Christianity in the gross ignorance of its votaries.

Thus a prince or king raged against Christians, as represented by a burning mountain. Thus the mountain was cast into the sea, when, by the fall of this apostate emperor from the Christian faith, Christians were deprived of a great proportion of their foreign advantages. All the advantages which arise to Christians from a civil establishment, and from the knowledge of philosophy and of the liberal arts, however valuable when rightly used, are only foreign advantages. Christianity in its purity, can exist without them; and, without them, Christians can enjoy the peculiar
and

and native advantages of that divine religion. Deprived of these, however, Christians have it not so much in their power to propagate their religion to distant countries. These external advantages are the seas to them, by which foreign commerce is carried on.

The account which Mosheim gives of this event corresponds with the most minute exactness to the hieroglyphic under this second trumpet.

Mosheim Hist. Vol : i. pages 171, 172. " This
" flourishing progress of the Christian religion was
" greatly interrupted, and the church reduced to
" the brink of destruction, when Julian the son of
" Julius Constantius, and the only remaining
" branch of the imperial family, was placed at the
" head of affairs. This active and adventurous
" prince, after having been declared emperor by the
" army in the year 380, in consequence of his ex-
" ploits among the Gauls, was, upon the death of
" Constantius, the year following, confirmed in the
" undivided possession of the empire. No event
" could be less favourable to the Christians. For
" though he had been educated in the principles
" of Christianity, yet he apostatized from that di-
" vine religion, and employed all his efforts to re-
" store the expiring superstitions of Polytheism to
" their former vigour, credit, and lustre. This apo-
" stacy of Julian from the gospel of Christ to the
" worship of the gods, was owing partly to his aversion
to

“ to the Constantine family, who had imbrued their
“ hands in the blood of his father, brother and kin-
“ men; and partly to the artifices of the Platonic
“ philosophers, who abused his credulity, and flat-
“ tered his ambition, by fictitious miracles and pom-
“ pous predictions. It is true, this prince seemed a-
“ verse to the use of violence in propagating supersti-
“ tion, and suppressing the truth; nay, he carried the
“ appearances of moderation and impartiality so far,
“ as to allow his subjects a full power of judging for
“ themselves in religious matters; and of worship-
“ ping the Deity in the manner they thought most
“ rational. But, under this mask of moderation,
“ he attacked Christianity with the utmost bitter-
“ ness, and, at the same time, with the most con-
“ summate dexterity. By art and stratagem, he
“ undermined the church; removing the privileges
“ that were granted to Christians, and their spiri-
“ tual rulers; shutting up the schools in which they
“ taught philosophy and the liberal arts; encou-
“ raging the sectaries and schismatics, who brought
“ dishonour upon the gospel by their divisions;
“ composing books against the Christians; and us-
“ ing a variety of other means to bring the reli-
“ gion of Jesus to ruin and contempt. Julian ex-
“ tended his views yet farther, and was meditating
“ projects of a still more formidable nature against
“ the Christian church; which would have felt,
“ no doubt, the fatal and ruinous effects of his in-
“ veterate

“veterate hatred, if he had returned victorious from the Persian war which he entered to immediately after his accession to the empire.”

The apostacy of Julian, with its consequences to Christians, was an event of that magnitude which accords to the dignity of prophecy; and by which the Christian church had good reason to be alarmed. The Christian church had been established by law, for above fifty years, under the reigns of Constantine the Great and his three sons. It had enjoyed not only protection and civil establishment, but many privileges had been lavished upon it with a profuse hand, by these emperors. During that period, it is natural to suppose, that the Christians concluded that the emperors should ever after protect and countenance the church. When therefore the emperor Julian not only withdrew his protection, but apostatized from, and oppressed the Christian church, they would have been apt to have sunk into despair; and many of them might have been tempted to have abandoned that church which they saw abandoned, and again persecuted by the lords of the world, had it not been for the prediction of the apostacy of Julian, and its consequences, by this trumpet. That event, as the *accomplishment* of this prediction, instead of shaking their faith and patience, tended to strengthen and confirm them both. It served to teach them that the revolutions of empires are foreseen and overruled by that
God,

God, who protects truth and true religion ; that the church of Christ is not to depend upon civil establishments for its existence, or even its prosperity ;—that these shall rise or fall as the purposes of the state, the policy of the rulers, or circumstances often more secret than the greatest of these secrets direct ; while the church of Christ, supported by that Being by whom kings reign, shall stand immovable as on a rock.

Verses 10th, 11th.—And the third angel sounded, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters : and the name of the star is called Wormwood : and the third part of the waters became wormwood, and many of the men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.

The third great event by which the Christian church should be alarmed, is predicted by a great star falling from heaven. It was formerly shewn, that a star is the symbol for a minister of religion. In chap. i. 20. it is expressly said, “ the seven stars “ are the angels (i. e. ministers) of the seven “ churches.”

This

This star is a great one, that is, a minister of religion highly elevated above others by his greatness. This star fell from heaven, that is, from the church of Christ. He did not fall unto the earth, (the Roman empire), like the star chap. ix, 1. but he fell upon the rivers and fountains of waters. He disturbed and interrupted that mutual, beneficial, and comfortable intercourse which different societies of Christians, in different parts of the Christian church, had kept up with one another before his fall, and he rendered the institutions of religion hurtful to many of them.

Though this star fell from heaven, it did not lose its light. It burned as a lamp. It shone with a greater blaze after, than it had done before its fall. But its light, and the source of its light, were very different after its fall from what they had been before it. When a star in heaven, its light was derived from the sun, the fountain of light; and though its blaze was not so great, its light was much more pure, steady, and extensive. When fallen, its light was derived from a fire kindled on this earth; and, though its blaze was greater, like that of a lamp, its light extended to a small distance only, and did not reach to heaven.

Though this distinguished minister of religion was to lose, by his fall, that genuine lustre of truth, virtue, purity, and simplicity, which the ministers of the gospel derive from Christ, the Sun of right-

teousness, the fountain of truth and purity; yet he was to shine with that outward shew of worldly pomp, grandeur, and power, which is derived from the vanity of this world, and which strikes worldly minded men with much more force than truth, virtue, and simplicity of manners can do.

This star was called *Wormwood*. This is a shrub very bitter to the taste, which communicates its bitterness to water, when it is infused in it. It is thus predicted that the contentions stirred up by this fallen illustrious minister, should cause such bitterness among different congregations of Christians, as should destroy, in many who bore the Christian name, that love of truth, supreme attachment to Christ, supreme love of God, sincere and affectionate love of one another, which is the very life of Christians.

“Many men died of the waters.” In this book, *saints* are distinguished from *men*, and from them who *dwell on the earth*. *Saints* always signify real Christians; *they that dwell on the earth*, citizens of Rome; and *men*, the men of the world at large. The contentions to be stirred up by this fallen minister, should be of such a nature, as should not pervert and destroy real Christians, but as should hinder many professing Christians from learning true religion, and thus should kill them with spiritual death. And the contentions should run so high

high, as to bring on wars, and even temporal death, upon men.

This trumpet foretold, and was most exactly fulfilled in the ambition, worldly power, and pre-eminence of the bishop of Constantinople, and the bitter consequences of that ambition. The ambition of this bishop kindled up a hot contention between the eastern and western bishops, which stirred up wars between them, and at last entirely separated the eastern from the western church.

This is the greatest separation which ever took place in the church, and it hath continued for the greatest length of time. It took its rise, not from any religious differences, but from the ambition of the bishops of Constantinople and of Rome. Each laid claim to supremacy, neither would yield to the other; the eastern bishops adhered to the bishop of Constantinople, and the western to the bishop of Rome; a separation therefore of the eastern and western church was inevitable.

All the particulars of this prediction are exactly accomplished, in the history of the ambition of the bishop of Constantinople, and of the separation of the eastern, or Greek church, from the western, or Latin church. This bishop began to fall from the purity of a minister of Christ's religion, very soon after the apostacy of Julian, which was predicted by the preceding trumpet, and in the same year 381.

Of this great event, Mosheim thus writes, *Hist.* Vol. I. page 185. "Accordingly, in a council held
 " at Constantinople, in the year 381, by the au-
 " thority of Theodosius the Great, the bishop of
 " that city was, during the absence of the bishop of
 " Alexandria, and against the consent of the Ro-
 " man prelate, placed by the third canon of that
 " council, in the first rank after the bishop of
 " Rome; and consequently above those of Alexan-
 " dria and Antioch. Nectarius was the first bi-
 " shop, who enjoyed these new honours accumu-
 " lated upon the see of Constantinople."

Page 186. "This sudden revolution in the ec-
 " clesiastical government, and this unexpected pro-
 " motion of the bishop of Byzantium (the antient
 " name of Constantinople) to a higher rank, to the
 " detriment of other prelates of the first eminence
 " in the church, were productive of the most dis-
 " agreeable effects. For this promotion not only
 " filled the bishops of Alexandria with the bitter-
 " est aversion to those of Constantinople, but also
 " excited those deplorable contentions and dis-
 " putes between these latter and the Roman pon-
 " tiffs, which were carried on for many ages with
 " such various success, and concluded at length in
 " the entire separation of the Latin and Greek
 " churches."

Page 242. "To these lamentable evils were ad-
 " ded the ambitious quarrels and the bitter animo-
 " fities

"ities that arose among the patriarchs themselves.
 "and which produced the most bloody wars, and
 "the most detestable and horrid crimes. The pa-
 "triarch of Constantinople distinguished himself in
 "these odious contests. Elated with the favour
 "and proximity of the imperial court, he cast a
 "haughty eye on all sides, where any objects were
 "to be found on which he might exercise his lord-
 "ly ambition. On the one hand, he reduced un-
 "der his jurisdiction the patriarchs of Alexandria
 "and Antioch, as prelates only of the second or-
 "der; and, on the other hand, he invaded the dio-
 "cese of the Roman pontiff, and spoiled him of se-
 "veral provinces."

Verses 12th, 13th.—And the fourth angel
 sounded, and the third part of the sun was
 smitten, and the third part of the moon, and
 the third part of the stars; so as the third part
 of them was darkened, and the day shone not
 for a third part of it, and the night likewise.
 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying
 through the midst of heaven, saying with a
 loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabitants of
 the earth, by reason of the other voices of the
 trumpet of the three angels which are yet to
 sound.

The

The hieroglyphic contained in verse 12th, signifies a state of great darkness and ignorance. It is not a state of total darkness, it is not so great as shall be under the next trumpet, when "the sun and the air shall be darkened;" for only a third part of the sun, moon, and stars, are darkened.

In the natural world, light is conveyed to us from three different objects; from the sun directly as the fountain of light, and from the moon and stars by their reflection of the rays of the sun. When a part of the sun is eclipsed, the day is dusky and dark; and, when a part of the moon and of the stars is covered with clouds, the night becomes much darker than otherwise it would have been.

In the Christian church, intellectual light or religious knowledge is derived from three sources correspondent to these. First, from the sacred scriptures, the divine and direct source of religious truth; hence the symbol for the sacred scriptures is the sun. Secondly, from the positive institutions or ordinances of religion, which, like the moon, are suited to a state of comparative darkness, and are subject to change. They are not immutable like those parts of religion which are moral. For them the moon is, therefore, the symbol. And thirdly, from the ministers of religion, signified by the stars. Thus, by this trumpet

pet it is predicted, that such obscurity should be thrown over inspired scripture, such corruption should be introduced into the ordinances of religion, and so many of the ministers of religion should be so ignorant of the true nature of the Christian religion, that the church should in this way be involved in great darkness immediately after the event predicted by the third trumpet, that is, about the end of the fourth century.

John was also informed, that the three remaining trumpets should foretell three great and alarming events, full of wo and misery to the inhabitants of the earth, that is, to the citizens of the Roman empire. These events full of wo to the citizens of Rome, shall be illustrated under the fifth, sixth, and seventh trumpets, their proper places. These are indeed three great woes to them. They are all the corruptions of Popery, the invasions of the Mahometans, and at last the complete and final overthrow of Papal Rome; as shall be shewn in the commentary on the three last trumpets.

These three woes are, by a kind of anticipation, thus foretold in general terms under this trumpet, because they shall proceed from that gross ignorance and darkness which is the subject of this trumpet. These woes, which shall come upon the citizens of Rome, are intimated to John by an angel flying through the midst of heaven, (i. e. the church of Christ).

Though

Though the people of Rome, though the men of the world at large should not foresee the fatal consequences of the obscurity which should be thrown upon sacred scripture by false interpretations, of the perversion of the positive institutions of religion, and of the ignorance and corruption of the clergy; yet true Christians, who are the church of Christ, should plainly foresee that many fatal consequences should follow from such ignorance, darkness, and corruption. The prediction under this trumpet hath been fulfilled in that great darkness, ignorance, superstition, and corruption of morals which began in the end of the fourth century, and which prepared the world for the ambitious projects of the bishop of Rome, and for the gross errors and superstitions of Popery, which are predicted under the next trumpet.

This ignorance, superstition, and corruption of manners, which at this period had darkened only a third part of the luminaries of the church, increased until the people were prohibited to use the bible in a known tongue, and the ordinances of divine institution were buried under the cumbrous load of superstitious observances; by which commandments of men, the law of God was made void, and the ministers of religion became a disgrace, not merely to the Christian profession, but also to human nature, by their gross ignorance and vice. This darkness continued through all the dark ages

ges of the church, until at the dawn of the glorious Reformation it began gradually to be dispelled.

Of this ignorance, superstition, and corruption of morals, Mosheim thus writes, *Hist.* Vol. I. cent. 4. page 191. After saying that the principles of the Christian doctrine were explained and defended in a manner that discovered the greatest ignorance and an utter confusion of ideas, he adds, "Nor did
 " the evil end here ; for those vain fictions, which
 " an attachment to the Platonic philosophy, and to
 " popular opinions, had engaged the greatest part
 " of the Christian doctors to adopt before the time
 " of Constantine, were now confirmed, enlarged,
 " and embellished in various ways. From hence
 " arose that extravagant veneration for departed
 " saints, and those absurd notions of a certain fire
 " destined to purify separate souls, that now pre-
 " vailed, and of which the public marks were e-
 " very where to be seen. Hence also the celibacy
 " of the priests, the worship of images and relicts,
 " which in process of time almost utterly destroyed
 " the Christian religion ; or, at least eclipsed its lus-
 " tre, and corrupted its very essence in the most
 " deplorable manner. An enormous train of dif-
 " ferent superstitions were gradually substituted in
 " the place of true religion and genuine piety.
 " This odious revolution was owing to a variety of
 " causes. A ridiculous precipitation in receiving

“ new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating
“ the Pagan rites, and of blending them with the
“ Christian worship, and that idle propensity which
“ the generality of mankind have towards a gau-
“ dy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to e-
“ stablish the reign of superstition upon the ruins of
“ Christianity. Accordingly frequent pilgrimages
“ were undertaken to Palestine, and to the tombs
“ of the martyrs, as if there alone the sacred princi-
“ ples of virtue and the certain hope of salvation
“ were to be acquired. The reins being once let
“ loose to superstition, which knows no bounds, ab-
“ surd notions and idle ceremonies multiplied every
“ day. Quantities of dust and earth brought from
“ Palestine, and other places remarkable for their
“ supposed sanctity, were handed about as the most
“ powerful remedies against the violence of wicked
“ spirits, and were sold and bought every where at
“ enormous prices. The public processions and sup-
“ plications, by which the Pagans endeavoured to
“ appease their gods, were now adopted into the
“ Christian worship, and celebrated with great pomp
“ and magnificence in several places. The virtues
“ that had formerly been ascribed to the Heathen
“ temples, to their lustrations, to the statues of their
“ gods and heroes, were now attributed to Chris-
“ tian churches, to water consecrated by certain
“ forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men.
“ And the same privileges which the former enjoy-
“ ed

“ ed under the darkness of Paganism, were conferred upon the latter under the light of the gospel; or rather, under that cloud of superstition that was obscuring its glory. It is true, that as yet images were not very common, nor were there any statues at all. But it is at the same time as undoubtedly certain, as it is extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of the martyrs was modelled by degrees, according to the religious services that were paid to the gods before the coming of Christ.”

Page 193. “ The rest, after the example of Origen, are laborious in the search of far fetched interpretations; and pervert the interpretations of scripture, which they but half understand, by applying them, or rather straining them, to matters with which they have no connection. St. Augustin and Tychonius endeavoured to establish plain and wise rules for the interpretation of scripture, but their efforts were unsuccessful. The doctrines of Christianity had not a better fate, than the sacred scripture, from whence they were drawn. Origen was the great model, whom the most eminent of the Christian doctors followed in their explications of the truths of the gospel; which were, of consequence, explained according to the rules of the Platonic philosophy, as it was corrected and modified by that learned father for the instruction of the youth.”

Page 200. " When we cast an eye towards the
" lives and morals of Christians at this time, we
" find as formerly, a mixture of good and evil ;
" some eminent for their piety, and others infamous for their crimes. The number however,
" of immoral and unworthy Christians began so to
" increase, that the examples of real piety and virtue became extremely rare. When the terrors
" of persecution were totally dispelled ; when the
" church, secured from the efforts of its enemies,
" enjoyed the sweets of prosperity and peace ;
" when the most of the bishops exhibited to their
" flocks the contagious examples of arrogance,
" luxury, effeminacy, animosity and strife, with
" other vices too numerous to mention ; when
" the inferior rulers and doctors of the church fell
" into a slothful and opprobrious negligence of the
" duties of their respective stations, and employed
" in vain wranglings and disputes, that zeal and attention, that were due to the culture of piety,
" and to the instruction of their people ; and when,
" to complete the enormity of this horrid detail,
" multitudes were drawn into the profession of
" Christianity, not by the power of conviction and
" argument, but by the prospect of gain and the
" fear of punishment ; then indeed it was no wonder that the church was contaminated with shoals
" of profligate Christians, and that the virtuous
" few were, in a manner, oppressed and overwhelmed

“whelmed with the superior numbers of the wicked and licentious. It is true, that the same rigorous penitence which had taken place before Constantine the Great, continued now in full force against flagrant transgressors; but when the reign of corruption becomes universal, the vigour of the law yields to its sway, and a weak execution defeats the purposes of the most salutary discipline. Such was now unhappily the case: the age was sinking daily from one period of corruption to another; the great and the powerful sinned with impunity; and the obscure and the indigent felt alone the severity of the laws.”

The barbarous nations which overspread the Roman empire in the fifth century, carried ignorance and darkness along with their conquests; and banished real science from the empire. Thus Mosheim writes, *Hist.* Vol. i. page 237. “But the barbarous nations which either spread desolation, or formed settlements in the Roman territories, checked the growth of those genial seeds which the hands of science had sowed in more auspicious times. These savage invaders, possessed of no other ambition than that of conquest, and looking upon military courage as the only source of true virtue and solid glory, beheld of consequence the arts and sciences with the utmost contempt. Wherever therefore they extended
“their

“ their conquests, ignorance and darkness followed
“ their steps, and the culture of the sciences was
“ confined to the priests and monks alone. And
“ even among these, learning degenerated from its
“ primitive lustre, and put on the most unseemly
“ and fantastic form. Amidst the seduction of
“ corrupt examples, the alarms of perpetual dan-
“ ger, and the horrors and devastations of war, the
“ sacerdotal and monastic orders lost gradually all
“ taste for solid science, in the place of which they
“ substituted a lifeless spectre, an enormous phan-
“ tom of barbarous erudition.”

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

*Verses 1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th,
9th, 10th, 11th, 12th.*

AND the fifth angel founded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened, by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months; and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh

strieth a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon, One woe is past, and behold there come two woes more hereafter.

This passage contains a large hieroglyphic made up of many different parts, predictive of the state of the church of Rome for the space of 150 years.

The

The fifth great event by which Christians should be alarmed, is represented by a star falling from heaven to the earth. A minister of religion should fall from the church of Christ; but should still after his fall keep the name of, and be regarded as a minister of religion in the *earth*, that is, the Roman empire. He should be the instrument in the hand of the devil of introducing into the world that ignorance, error, superstition, and vice, which are derived from hell; which is signified by the key of the bottomless pit being given to him. From that infernal source of falsehood and vice, such ignorance, error, and vice should arise, by his instrumentality, as should darken the sacred scriptures, the sun of the Christian church; and should corrupt and darken the very air, the spirit and genius of religion itself. During this period, the bible should be gradually obscured, until it should be totally hid from the people; and the very spirit and genius of religion should be the reverse of what it formerly was. It was once light, but now it shall be darkness.

Religion in its own nature, and as taught in the sacred scriptures, is founded in the belief and love of truth, and is productive of real holiness: "The fear of the Lord is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding." "He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek

“ him” “ This a faithful saying, and these things
 “ I will that thou affirm constantly, that they
 “ who have believed in God might be careful to
 “ maintain good works.” But, in this period,
 that which should be called religion in the Roman
 empire should be founded in ignorance and impli-
 cit faith, and productive of superstitious observan-
 ces instead of true holiness. Ignorance is the mo-
 ther of that devotion.

From that ignorance and superstition a great
 swarm like locusts should overspread the Roman
 empire. They should be like locusts for their
 number, like scorpions for their poisonous nature,
 like horses prepared to battle for their fierceness.
 On their heads were as it were crowns like gold,
 to express their grandeur and magnificence;
 their faces were as men, to express their policy
 and worldly wisdom; and their hair as the hair of
 women, to express their enchanting charms.
 Their teeth were as lions, to signify their cruelty
 and greediness of their prey. By their iron
 breast-plates, it is signified that they should resist
 all opposition, for the time specified in this hiero-
 glyphic. By the sound of their wings, like the
 sound of chariots of many horses running to bat-
 tle, is signified the loud clamour, great force, and
 magnificence, with which they pursue all who
 oppose them. They had tails like scorpions, and
 stings in their tails. It is by the shaking of their
 tails

tails in a particular way that most of the brute creatures express their fawning. It is universally known that in this way dogs fawn upon their masters: Hence the tails of animals, in the symbolical language, signify fawning, flattering, and insinuating manners. Here, and also in verse 19th of this chapter, they signify that insinuating and fawning manner in which false doctrines should be taught in this period. As they have stings in their tails, these false doctrines, however smoothly instilled, shall poison and vex the minds of those who shall receive them.

In one thing they differ widely from locusts. "The locusts," as Agur observes, Prov. xxx. 27. "have no king; yet go they forth all of them by bands." But those, represented in this hieroglyphic by locusts for their number, had a king over them.

However numerous, artful, powerful, and fierce, they have a monarch who reigns over them with absolute sway. This king is the angel of the bottomless pit. He is the same person who is in verse 1st represented by a star fallen from heaven to the earth, to whom the key of the bottomless pit is given; and who, in the second verse, opens the bottomless pit, from which the smoke arose, out of which the locusts came.

As stars in heaven signify the angels, messengers, or ministers, of the churches of God, so the star
O o 2 fallen

fallen from heaven to the earth, to whom is given the key of the bottomless pit, signifieth the angel or minister of hell, who introduces into and propagates in the world those errors, superstitions, and vices, which are expressly called doctrines of devils, 1 Tim. iv. 1,—3. “Now the spirit speaketh expressly that, in the latter times, some shall depart from the faith, giving head to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their consciences seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth.”

His name is written both in the Hebrew and Greek languages. In the former he is called *Abaddon*, which signifies the Destroyer; and in the latter, *Apollyon*, which signifies also the Destroyer. This name is given him in both languages, to shew us that it is not his real name, but a symbolical one, which is of a signification very similar to that of his real name.

This symbolical name is of a signification directly opposite to that of the name given to the Divine Author of our salvation, Matth. i. 21. “Thou shalt call his name *Jesus*, for he shall save his people from their sins.” *Jesus* in the Hebrew language signifies a *saviour*, and *Abaddon* in the same language signifies a *destroyer*. The
Destroyer

Destroyer is directly opposite to Jesus the Saviour; but he who in his character is directly opposite to Jesus Christ is the *Antichrist*.

In 2 Theff. ii. 3. Antichrist has the same name given him as in this hieroglyphic. He is called the *son of perdition*, the very same *Apollyon* in the Greek language which is applied to him here: But that passage in 2 Theff. ii. 1,—12. shall be fully considered when we come to chap. xiii.

These locusts were not, like the natural locusts, to hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree, but only men. By this part of the hieroglyphic it is declared that they are not natural locusts, but only persons symbolically represented by them. They were not to hurt the saints, but they were to hurt the citizens of the Roman empire. They were to hurt only those men who have not the seal of God in their forehead. All those sealed ones mentioned in chap. vii. that is, all real Christians, whom the Lord knows to be his, and who naming the name of Christ depart from iniquity, should receive no real hurt from these locusts and scorpions.

It was not the intention of these locusts to abstain from hurting the sealed servants of God, nor to hurt the citizens of Rome; but they were commanded to do in fact the very opposite of what they intended to do, and probably believed they were doing. Their errors and vices should be overruled

overruled and restrained by the unseen superintending hand of Divine providence, so as to save from their infectious influence all real Christians.

During this period, they should have no power to kill men ; but they should vex and torment them in such a manner as to render life itself a burden to them ; and to make them even wish for death, rather than live in such torment.

This particular power of tormenting men was granted to them for the space of five months. This period of five months is inseparably connected with two things : First, with the power granted to the locusts to torment men, as distinguished from and opposed to the power of killing them, verse 5th. And second, with the character of their king as a stat or minister of religion, as distinguished from and opposed to his character as a beast of prey or temporal king, ver. 10, 11. But what period of time is signified by five months, and when do these five months commence and terminate? Without a precise answer to each of these questions, the time of five months mentioned in this hieroglyphic cannot convey any information to our minds. A precise and determinate answer may be given to them both. In the symbolical, which is the language of prophecy, five months signify 150 years. These 150 years were to commence at the time the star should fall from heaven to the earth, and at the
time,

time when the locusts should receive power to torment men, which two events should be contemporaneous.

Having thus fixed their commencement, it must be evident that their termination must be just 150 years after that time. But their termination is fixed also by two contemporaneous events. The one is the time when these locusts shall have power not only to torment, but also to kill men; and the other is when their king should not only be a star but also a beast of prey. The first of these events being fixed for the commencement, and the last for the termination of the five months; if it shall appear from the history of these events that there were exactly 150 years between them, that fact must prove that this account of the time signified by the symbol *five months*, is the right one.

As we shall frequently meet with predictions of times in this book, as the right knowledge of the symbolical or prophetic manner of expressing times is one of the best helps to understand this book, and every other prophetic book in which periods of time are mentioned; and as this is the first place in which a period of time is mentioned in this book, it will be necessary and proper that I here explain the nature of the symbolical language relative to time.

It was formerly shewn in what manner, in that language, intellectual, moral, and spiritual objects are signified by material and visible ones. But
sometimes

sometimes it is necessary to represent an object by a symbol of the same species with the thing signified by that symbol. In particular this is the case with time. Of absolute time our idea is as inadequate and confused as it is of eternity, which probably is the best expression for absolute time. Our idea of time therefore, so far as it is adequate and distinct, is of relative time. And this idea is formed by some measure of a certain definite proportion of time. The most natural measure of relative time, and which all nations have adopted, is the circuit of this globe from one point in the ecliptic until it returns to the same point, by which a solar year is measured. This, as being a kind of natural, or at least universal measure of time, is called *a time* in the symbolical language. It is thus used in chap. xii. 14. and in Daniel vii. 25. Thus *a time* signifies a year, not a natural nor civil year, but a prophetic year, that is, a year consisting of 360 prophetic days. When any thing is represented by a symbol of the same kind with itself, the greater is always represented by the lesser. The reason of this is, that the symbolical language, when written in its proper characters, was a kind of painting or drawing, and that the pictures might be contained in any convenient bounds in the books written in that language, it was necessary that they should always be much less than the things they represented. Hence in the spoken symbolical language,

guage, the symbol is always the lesser, and is called the lesser; and the thing signified is the greater; and is called the greater, whenever the symbol and the thing signified are of the same species. Thus, if one city is represented by another, a small city is the symbol of a larger city. Thus ancient Babylon, for her idolatry, luxury, and oppression of the people of God, was the symbol of Papal Rome. Thus chap. xiv. 8. Rome is called Babylon that *great* city, and chap. xvii. 5. Babylon the *great*, to shew that it is not antient Babylon which is meant, but the city and empire of which antient Babylon was the symbol. Thus, with respect to time, a day is the symbol for a year, because both of them are measured by the revolutions of the same planet; the former by its diurnal, and the latter by its annual revolution; and as the former is the lesser, it is, according to the idiom of that language, the symbol of the latter, which is the greater. Accordingly, in sacred scripture we are repeatedly told, that a day signifies a year in prophetic language, Numbers xiv. 34. "after the
"number of the days in which ye searched the
"land, even forty days, each day for a year,
"shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years.
"Ezek. iv. 4.—6. "Lie thou also upon thy
"left side, and lay the iniquities of the house of Is-
"rael upon it, according to the number of the days
"that thou shalt lie upon it, thou shalt bear their

Vox. l.

P p

" iniquity,

"iniquity. For I have laid upon thee the years of
"their iniquity, according to the number of the
"days, three hundred and ninety days; so shalt
"thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.
"And when thou hast accomplished them, lie a-
"gain on thy right side, and thou shalt bear the i-
"niquity of the house of Judah forty days: I have
"appointed thee each day for a year." Hence in
this language a week containing seven days is the
symbol for seven years. Dan. ix. 4. The famous
prophecy of seventy weeks is 490 years, and in fact,
was accomplished in that time. Hence too, a
month consisting of thirty days is the symbol for
thirty years. The year antiently was divided into
twelve months, and every month into thirty days;
so that the year consisted of three hundred and
sixty days, as Sir Isaac Newton shews in his chro-
nology. That this is the year which is used in this
book, in the prophetic parts of it, is evident from
chap. xii. 6. 14. and chap. xiii. 5. In all these pas-
sages, the identical same period of time, as shall be
shewn in the commentary on them, is expressed in
the first by days, in the second by years, and in the
third by months, in such a manner as to prove
that in this book every year contains twelve
months, and every month contains thirty days.
In the first of these, that period is said to be 1260
days; in the second a time and times and half a
time, that is, three years and an half; and in the
third

third, forty-two months. But when each year contains twelve months, three years and an half make up just 42 months ; and when each month contains 30 days, the 42 months make up exactly 1260 days. Hence the five months in this hieroglyphic are five times 30 years, that is, 150 years.

But it is also necessary, that it be shewn when the expressions of time are to be taken symbolically, and when literally ; that is, when a day signifies a year, and when it signifies only twenty-four hours, when a month signifies thirty years, and when it signifies only thirty days. If there were no fixed rule by which to know when the expressions of time are to be taken in the one sense, and when in the other, they could serve no good purpose whatever, and confusion would be the consequence of using them at all. To remove this difficulty, let the following rule be attended to: When the passage in which any of these expressions occur, is not in the symbolical language, then these expressions are to be taken literally. But if the passage is in the symbolical language, then they must be taken symbolically. In no instance must we deviate from this rule, unless when a plain direction or injunction for that deviation is given in the passage itself, by which a meaning different from its ordinary one is put upon the expression. An instance of this commanded deviation

tion occurs in chap. xiii. 18. where it is said, "For it is the *number of a man*, and his number is "666." By being informed that this is the number of a man, we are told that it is not the number of a prophet, or in other words, that it is such a number as men ordinarily use, (a literal one), not such as prophets use, (a symbolical one). But this shall be more fully explained in the commentary on that verse.

All prophetic writings are interspersed with passages explanatory of the highly symbolical parts of the books. These are the proper keys to the prophecy. They frequently occur in this book, which shall appear as we proceed. All expressions of time used in these explanatory passages, and indeed all the terms used in them must be taken literally, otherwise they could not serve the purpose of explaining the symbolical parts of the book.

This long and minute prediction hath been exactly fulfilled in all its parts, in the supremacy of the Roman pontiff; in the great swarms of false doctrines, and of monks, which like locusts overspread the Roman empire, at the time he assumed that supremacy; and in that vexation and disturbance which the Roman pontiff, and the different orders of monks under his command, caused in the empire, by daily grasping at more power.

In the year 606, Phocas the emperor conferred the title of Universal Bishop upon the Roman pontiff,

tiff, Boniface III. At this time the papal supremacy was introduced. Now the bishop of Rome fell from that purity, that equality of rank among the ministers of religion, and that simplicity of manners which accord to the scriptural character of a minister in heaven, (the church of Christ), and assumed that power, pre-eminence, and pomp, in which the ministers of the Roman church have since shone in the Papal see. At this time, the orders of monks increased like swarms of locusts. These monks were the tools of the Roman pontiff. However various their orders were, they all paid unlimited obedience to his commands. By grasping at supreme authority, the Roman pontiff excited many violent contentions and quarrels between him and his army of monks, and the emperors and bishops. These monks too, by their insinuating arts misled many into the dangerous errors and hurtful practices, which they taught and exemplified. But they could not lead into destructive errors any of those sealed ones who were the true servants of God.

The wisdom, the policy, the insinuating arts, the cruelties, the intrepidity, and grandeur of the Roman pontiff, with the different religious orders under his command, exactly correspond to the particular parts of this prophetic hieroglyphic. By their doctrines, the very nature of religion was obscured and changed, the sun and the air of it were

were darkened. During the space of 150 years the Roman pontiff, notwithstanding all his greatness, pomp, and power, continued in the sole character of a star, that is of a minister of religion. It was in the year 756 that, by the famous grant of Pepin king of France, he became also a temporal prince. In this last character he is predicted in chap. xiii. under the symbol of a beast, (*bestie*). But, from the year 606, when he became universal or supreme bishop, to the year 756, when he became also a temporal prince, was exactly 150 years. During this period, too, he with all his tribes of monks greatly disturbed and vexed the emperors and citizens of Rome, but they had no power of killing any till these 150 years were expired. Verse 5. "And to them it was given that they should *not kill* them, but that they should be "tormented *five months*." It was not till the Roman pontiff became also a temporal prince (*anno* 756) that he assumed and exerted the power of delivering heretics over to the civil magistrate to be put to death.

Of these events Mosheim thus writes, *Hist.* vol. I. page 320, "The disputes about pre-eminence, that had so long subsisted between the "bishops of Rome and Constantinople, proceeded "in this century (the 7th) to such violent lengths, "as laid the foundation of that deplorable schism "which afterwards separated the Greek and La-
"tin

“ tin churches. The most learned writers, and
 “ those who are most remarkable for their know-
 “ ledge of antiquity, are generally agreed, that
 “ Boniface III. engaged Phocas, that abominable
 “ tyrant, who waded to the imperial throne through
 “ the blood of the emperor Mauritius, to take
 “ from the bishop of Constantinople the title of
 “ œcumenical or universal bishop, and to confer
 “ it upon the Roman pontiff. They relate this
 “ however upon the sole authority of Baronius,
 “ for none of the antient writers have men-
 “ tioned it. If indeed we are to give credit to
 “ Anastasius and Paul Deacon, something like
 “ what we have related was transacted by Phocas;
 “ for, when the bishops of Constantinople main-
 “ tained that their church was not only equal in
 “ dignity and authority to that of Rome, but also
 “ the head of all the Christian churches, this ty-
 “ rant opposed their pretensions, and granted the
 “ pre-eminence to the church of Rome; and thus
 “ was the papal supremacy first introduced. The
 “ Roman pontiffs used all sorts of methods to main-
 “ tain and enlarge the authority and pre-eminence
 “ which they had acquired by a grant from the most
 “ odious tyrant that ever disgraced the annals of
 “ history.”

Page 321. “ The progress of vice among the
 “ subordinate rulers and ministers of the church
 “ was, at this time truly deplorable; neither bi-
 “ shops,

“ shops, presbyters, deacons, nor even the cloister-
“ ed monks, were exempt from the general con-
“ tagion, as appears from the unanimous confes-
“ sion of all the writers of this century (the 7th)
“ that are worthy of credit. In those very places
“ that were consecrated to the advancement of
“ piety and the service of God, there was little else
“ to be seen than ghostly ambition, insatiable a-
“ varice, pious frauds, intolerable pride, and a su-
“ perstitious contempt of the natural rights of the
“ people, with many other vices still more enormous.
“ There reigned also, in many places, the most bit-
“ ter dissensions between the bishops and the
“ monks. The former had employed the greedy
“ hands of the latter to augment the episcopal
“ treasure, and to draw contributions from all parts
“ to support them in their luxury, and the in-
“ dulgence of their lusts. The monks, perceiving
“ this, and also unwilling to serve the bishops in
“ such a dishonourable character, fled for refuge
“ to the emperors and princes, under whose civil
“ jurisdiction they lived ; and afterwards, for their
“ further security, had recourse to the protection
“ of the Roman pontiff. This protection they
“ readily obtained; and the imperious pontiffs,
“ always fond of exerting their authority, exempt-
“ ed by degrees the monastic orders from the ju-
“ risdiction of the bishops. The monks, in return
“ for this important service, devoted themselves
“ wholly

“ wholly to advance the interests, and to main-
 “ tain the dignity of the bishop of Rome. They
 “ made his cause their own, and represented him
 “ as a sort of god to the ignorant multitude, over
 “ whom they had gained a prodigious ascendancy;
 “ by the notion that generally prevailed of the
 “ sanctity of the monastic orders.—In the mean
 “ time, the monks were every where in high re-
 “ pute, and their cause was accompanied with the
 “ most surprising success, particularly among the
 “ Latins, through the protection and favour of the
 “ Roman pontiff, and their Pharisaical affectation
 “ of uncommon piety and devotion.”

Page 324. “ In this barbarous age, religion lay
 “ expiring under a motely and enormous heap of
 “ superstitious inventions, and had neither the cou-
 “ rage nor the force to raise her head, or to display
 “ her native charms to a darkened and deluded
 “ world. In the earliest periods of the church, the
 “ worship of Christians was confined to the one su-
 “ preme God, and his Son Jesus Christ: but the
 “ Christians of this century multiplied the objects
 “ of their devotion, and paid homage to the re-
 “ mains of the true cross, to the images of saints,
 “ and to bones whose real owners were extremely
 “ dubious. The primitive Christians, in order to ex-
 “ cite men to a course of piety and virtue, set before
 “ them that heavenly state, and those mansions of
 “ misery which the gospel hath revealed as the dis-

“ferent portions of the righteous and the wicked :
“while the Christians of this century (the 7th)
“talked of nothing else but a certain fire which ef-
“faced the stains of vice, and purified souls from
“their corruption. The former taught, that
“Christ by his sufferings and death had made a
“tonement for the sins of mortals; the latter seem-
“ed, by their superstitious doctrines, to exclude
“from the kingdom of heaven such as had not
“contributed by their offerings to augment the
“riches of the clergy or the church. The former
“were only studious to attain to virtuous simpli-
“city of life and manners, and employed their
“principal zeal and diligence in the culture of
“true and genuine piety; while the latter placed
“the whole of religion in external rites and bodily
“exercises. The methods also of solving the diffi-
“culties and dissipating the doubts that often a-
“rise in inquisitive minds, were of a piece with the
“rest of the superstitious system that now prevail-
“ed. The two great and irresistible arguments
“against all doubts, were the authority of
“the church, and the working of miracles: and
“the production of these prodigies required no
“extraordinary degree of dexterity in an age of
“such gross and universal ignorance.”

It was in the end of the year 755, or the begin-
ning of the year 756, that Pepin king of France
made the famous grant of Rome and some neigh-
bouring

bouring cities to Pope Stephen II. and his successors; in consequence of which, he and they became temporal princes. From the year 606, in which the bishop of Rome became universal bishop, to the year 756, when he became a temporal prince, is exactly 150 years, the five months in this prophecy. Of this event, those acquainted with the Latin language may see a full and particular account in *Sigonius de regno Italiae*, pages 79, 80, under the year 755 and 756.

On this subject Mosheim thus writes, *Hist.* vol. I. pages 353, 354. "Nay, one of these monarchs, named Aistulphus, carried his views still farther. "Elated with these new accessions to his dominions, he meditated the conquest of Rome and its territories; and formed the ambitious project of reducing all Italy under the yoke of the Lombards. The terrified pontiff, Stephen II. addresses himself to his powerful patron and protector Pepin, represents to him his deplorable condition, and implores his assistance. The French monarch embarks with zeal in the cause of the suppliant pontiff; crosses the Alps, A. D. 754 with a numerous army; and having defeated Aistulphus, obliged him by solemn treaty to deliver up to the see of Rome the Exarchate of Ravenna, Pentapolis, and all the cities, castles, and territories which he had seized in the Roman dukedom. It was not, however, long before the

“ Lombard prince violated, without any remorse, an
“ engagement which he had entered into with re-
“ luctance. In the year 755 he laid siege to
“ Rome for the second time, but was again obliged
“ to sue for peace by the victorious arms of Pepin,
“ who returned into Italy, and forcing the Lom-
“ bard to execute the treaty he had so audaciously
“ violated, made a new grant of the Exarchate
“ and of Pentopolis to the Roman pontiff, and his
“ successors in the apostolic see of Peter. And
“ thus was the bishop of Rome raised to the rank of
“ a *temporal prince*.”

In how striking a manner is the period of 150 years accomplished in terms of the prophecy? If Aistulphus the Lombard prince had not violated the solemn treaty which he entered into with Pepin in the 754, nor returned and laid siege to Rome a second time in the year 755, the bishop of Rome would have been made a temporal prince more than a full year before the predicted time was come. But the purposes of heaven, and the predictions of God, must be minutely accomplished in spite of all opposition. Instruments shall never be wanting to accomplish them. The very wrath of man shall thus be made to praise God, and the remainder of his wrath he shall restrain. Aistulphus vented his wrath against Rome until the 150 years were accomplished, but he vented it no longer.

Though

Though he knew not what he was doing, and though he was acting with very different views, he was the instrument under God of preventing the Pope from becoming a temporal prince until the 150 years were expired; and when the predicted time was come, he could prevent him no longer, though he would as willingly as ever have done it. One of the three woes denounced in verse 13th of the preceding chapter against the inhabitants of the earth, the citizens of the Roman empire, is past in the events by which the predictions under the fifth trumpet were accomplished. These events were productive of much vexation and trouble to the citizens of Rome at the time, and they are the sources from which much greater troubles shall flow in future. Two of these woes still remain, and they shall be denounced by the sixth and seventh trumpets.

Verses 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st.—And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God, saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year,
for

for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breast-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouths and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold and silver, and brass and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

The

The hieroglyphic under the sixth trumpet is introduced by a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which was before God: Upon the horns of the golden altar Aaron was to make atonement once in the year, Exod. xxx. 10. Hence the voice from the horns of this altar signifies, that the judgements denounced on the citizens of Rome by this trumpet, are a punishment, and as it were a sacrifice of atonement for their national idolatry and superstitions. The hieroglyphic contained in these verses intimates, that in the period contained under this trumpet, a command from God, in the course of his providence, should be given to loose four angels, that is, four messengers and ministers of the divine will, whose residence should be on the side of the river Euphrates. And that these four instruments of the divine will should accordingly be let loose for the space of 391 years and 15 days. In the symbolical language, a day is one year, a month is 30 years, a year is 360 years, and an hour, the 24th part of a year, is 15 days; all which added together, make up 391 years and 15 days.

These messengers of divine providence should slay a great number of the citizens of Rome. They should lead forth to the field of battle very large and numerous armies of horsemen. The number of their cavalry should be very remarkable for its greatness. Hence in verse 16th, John
first

first says that the number of them were two hundred thousand thousand, and next, that he heard the number of them.

Both the horses and the horsemen should be very fierce and warlike. The breast-plates of fire, jacinth, and brimstone, signify, that the colour of the breast-plates should be that which is made up by a mixture of flame and smoke. Fire is red, jacinth blue, and brimstone yellow. The mixture of these three colours is precisely that of the fire and smoke mixed together, which is emitted from a musket or cannon when it is fired off. By this colour of the breast-plate, it is signified, that these horsemen should be armed with offensive rather than defensive armour, and the terribleness of their appearance is signified.

It is also said, that out of the mouths of the horses issued fire, and smoke, and brimstone. These three epithets, like the three colours of the breast-plates, probably intimate that these horsemen should use fire arms, at least in their latest attacks upon the empire: A considerable quantity of brimstone is used in the composition of gunpowder; and fire, and smoke, with the smell of brimstone, is a most natural symbol of the appearance of the mouth of a gun when it is discharged. That these three signify destructive weapons, is still farther evident from verse 18th, in which it is said, "by these three was the third-part of men killed, by"
"the

“ the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone which issued out of their mouths.”

In the early periods of the world, fire arms were unknown. The offensive weapons by which men attacked one another in their wars, were the sling and the stone, the bow and the arrow, the javelin, the dart, the sword, and the spear. During the periods in which these were the only offensive weapons, certain defensive ones were also in use. Of these, the breast plate was a considerable one. After the invention and use of fire arms, the ancient coat of mail being found not to be proof against powder and ball, was therefore laid aside.

Fire arms were not invented for several hundred years after the date of this book. But John, guided by that Divine Spirit, to whom all times and things past, present, and future are ever present ; in this hieroglyphic foretells the use of fire arms by those armies described in it, in their latest engagements with the European powers ; and also, that when these should be invented, the use of breast-plates or defensive weapons should cease.

These armies should kill a great proportion of the citizens of Rome, but they should not dissolve their empire. They should destroy them in two ways. First, by their mouths ; by which, like lions and other beasts of prey, they should, with open force and violence, destroy and kill a great

number of the citizens of Rome. And secondly, by their tails; by their fawning and flattery, by which they instill their false doctrines into their minds.

Their tails are different from those of all others, except some of the most monstrous serpents, for their tails had heads: that is, in their religious system they should connect insinuating manners with open violence and bodily force. These qualities seldom meet in the same character; their connection is unnatural, but not more so than that of the parts which make up its symbol in this hieroglyphic; "for their tails were like unto serpents and had heads, and with them they do hurt."

These armies of horsemen should appear not only as warriors, but also as teachers of religion. They should teach their system of religion not only by the most insinuating manners, artfully addressing the ruling passions and prejudices of men; but when such artful methods proved unsuccessful, they should propagate their religion by the edge of the sword, with all the force and violence of war.

In the 20th and 21st verses, we are informed what effects these calamities, by which a third part of (the men) the citizens of Rome, should be killed, should have upon the rest of (the men) the citizens of Rome, who should survive the 391 years of
of

of these dreadful calamities.—Judgements are inflicted on men for aggravated wickedness, and they ought to lead them to repentance. They sometimes accomplish this beneficial purpose, but this should not be the case with the Roman people under these calamities. “The rest of the men repented not.” Their sins are particularly enumerated, even those to which the citizens of Rome should be addicted, and by which their character should be marked at the time to which this prediction relates. That they should continue in the practice of these, after the expiration of this period; notwithstanding all those wars, in which, so great a proportion of their fellow citizens should be killed.

The first of these is idolatry. Their idolatry is very particularly described, as consisting in the worship of demons or departed spirits, idols of gold, and of silver, brass, stone, and wood. The absurdity and impiety of such idolatry, are expressed by a declaration that these idols can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. The rest are their murders, their forceries or magical tricks, by which, under the name of miracles, they should impose on the ignorant, the weak, and the prejudiced; their fornication; and their theft, by which, without giving value for it, they should artfully seize on the property of others.

The great events predicted under this trumpet, were the long and destructive wars brought upon

the Roman empire by the Turks, the rise and progress of the Mahometan religion, and the continuance of the church of Rome, after all these calamities, in all that idolatry, and in all those vices enumerated in these verses, which marked their character in that period in which they were harassed by the Turkish arms.

The various circumstances which attended these events, exactly corresponded to those enumerated in this hieroglyphical prediction. The residence of these Turkish armies was upon the banks of the river Euphrates. This great river was the boundary between them and the Roman empire. In the year 606, Mahomet began to pretend to revelation. From that time till the year 622, he formed his plan in a very secret manner in a cave near Mecca, and began to execute it in a private and peaceable, but artful manner, in that town and its neighbourhood. In the year 622, he fled for fear of his life from the people of Mecca, enraged at him for his imposture, to Medina, then called Yatreb. From this flight of Mahomet, the hegira or computation of time among the Mahometans begins. Now it was that he told his disciples, that his religion was not to be propagated by disputing, but by fighting. Till the year 631 he was employed in propagating his religion through Arabia; and in subduing and uniting under his government, in one great empire, all the scattered tribes of the Arabs.

Having

Having founded a new religion and a very extensive empire, in the space of twenty three years, he died the next year.

On the death of its founder, the Saracen empire was in some danger by a competition for the succession. But Abubeker suppressed several rebellions, and succeeded to Mahomet. In his short reign of two years and a few months, he took several towns belonging to the Greek emperor. He was succeeded by Omar, and Omar was succeeded by Othman. Under these heads of the Saracen empire, a great part of the eastern empire was conquered; but the western empire had hitherto escaped the invasions of these fierce and numerous warriors. On the death of Othman, about the year 655, a quarrel about the succession raised up intestine wars among the Saracens, by which a stop was put to all their foreign invasions. They were thus bound up by their intestine divisions and quarrels, during the reigns of Yefid, Moawiah the second, Marwan, and Abdomehlic, Caliphs of the Saracens, for above forty years.

These four caliphs were the four angels bound on the river Euphrates. They were the heads of those Saracens, who were the angels or messengers of divine vengeance to the Roman empire, and they were bound on the banks of the Euphrates, by the chains of their own intestine divisions. It is thus, by the superintendency of his providence, over
even

even the passions of men, that God binds and looses the warriors at his pleasure. "Surely the wrath of man praises God, and the remainder of his wrath he restrains."

Near the end of the seventh century, most probably about the year 699, the Saracens invaded the western parts of Europe. We are assured by authentic history, that they carried their invasions into Spain in the year 714. For the period of three hundred and ninety one years, the Saracens harrassed the western parts of Europe in the most distressing manner, and possessed themselves of a great part of Spain, France, Italy, and Sicily. Their invasions did not receive a full check, nor were they repulsed from Sicily, the last of their settlements in Europe, until the year 1090; which is exactly 391 years from the year 699, the time of their first invasion of the western parts of Europe.

Had historians been sufficiently precise in fixing the exact day of the first invasion of the western world by the Saracens, and of their complete expulsion from it; most certainly it would have appeared that the period of their invasions of the western world was exactly three hundred and ninety one years and fifteen days. Days are as clearly foreseen by God as years, and that same irresistible and almighty hand which loosed the armies of the Saracens on a fixed day, could bind them

them on a fixed day. He who says to the raging sea, (Job xxxviii. 11.) "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed;" with equal ease, Psalm lxxv. 7. "stilleth the noise of the seas, the noise of their waves, and the tumult of the people." He does both without any miraculous interposition, by the superintendency of his providence over-ruling ordinary means and second causes.

These armies which issued from the other side of the Euphrates into the western parts of Europe, probably are styled *four* angels, not only because they were bound up by their intestine divisions, during the reigns of four caliphs; but also, because during the period of 391 years, the same people in consequence of certain revolutions among them, were known by the following *four* distinct names, the Arabs, the Saracens, the Turks, and the Ottoman empire. The armies which they led into the field, were remarkable for their number; and chiefly for their cavalry; and the Turks were equally remarkable for their own fierceness, and that of their horses.

In these wars, they killed prodigious numbers of the inhabitants of the western world. And they raged against them, chiefly on account of their idolatry. These warriors along with their arms carried the Mahometan religion into the Roman empire. That religion they propagated both by
the

the most insinuating and artful address, and also by the edge of the sword. At the time of these invasions, the church of Rome was remarkable for the invocation of saints, the worshipping of images, her pretensions to (feigned) miracles, and the vices of her clergy. Notwithstanding all that Rome suffered from the Turks, she continued afterwards in the practice of the same idolatry and vices.

Of these events, a full account is given in Prideaux's life of Mahomet, Ockley's history of the Saracens, Mariana's history of Spain, and Mezerai's history of France, which histories the learned can consult. Indeed these events are almost universally known. For the information of those who are not much acquainted with history, I shall transcribe a few passages from Mosheim's Church History, in which the chief of these events are narrated.

Vol. I. page 313. " But a new and most powerful
 " enemy to the Christian cause started up in Arabia,
 " A. D. 642, under the reign of Heraclius. This was
 " Mahomet, an illiterate man, but endowed by na-
 " ture with the most flowing and attractive elo-
 " quence, and with a vast and penetrating genius ;
 " distinguished also by the advantages he derived
 " from the place of his birth, which added lustre
 " to his name and his undertaking. This adven-
 " turous impostor declared publicly, that he was
 " commissioned by God to destroy polytheism and
 " idolatry, and then to reform first the religion of
 the

“ the Arabians, and afterwards the Jewish and
 “ Christian worship. For these purposes he delivered
 “ a new law, which is known by the name of the
 “ Koran or Alkoran, and having gained several
 “ victories over his enemies, he compelled an in-
 “ credible number of persons, both in Arabia and
 “ the neighbouring nations to receive his doctrines,
 “ and to range themselves under his standards. E-
 “ lated with this rapid and unexpected success, he
 “ extended yet farther his ambitious views, and
 “ formed the vast and arduous project of founding
 “ an empire. Here again success crowned his adven-
 “ turous efforts, and his plan was executed with
 “ such intrepidity and impudence, that he died
 “ master of all Arabia, besides several adjacent pro-
 “ vinces.”

Page 316. “ After the death of Mahomet,
 “ which happened A. D. 632, his followers led
 “ on by an amazing intrepidity and a fanatical
 “ fury, and assisted, as we have already observed,
 “ by those Christians whom the Greeks had treat-
 “ ed with such severity, extended their conquests
 “ beyond the limits of Arabia, and subdued Syria,
 “ Persia, Egypt, and other countries under their
 “ dominion.—The progress however of this tri-
 “ umphant sect received a considerable check by
 “ the civil dissensions which arose among them im-
 “ mediately after the death of Mahomet.”

Page 343. “ In the year 714, the Saracens
 “ crossed the sea which separates Spain from Af-

“ rica, dispersed the army of Roderic king of the
“ Spanish Goths, whose defeat was principally
“ due to the treachery of their general Julian,
“ and made themselves masters of the greatest
“ part of the territories of this vanquished prince.
“ About the same time, the empire of the Visigoths,
“ which had subsisted in Spain, above three hun-
“ dred years, was totally overturned by these fierce
“ and savage invaders, who also took possession of all
“ the maritime coasts of Gaul from the Pyrenean
“ mountains to the river Rhone, from whence
“ they made frequent excursions, and ravaged
“ the neighbouring countries with fire and sword.
“ The rapid progress of these bold invaders was,
“ indeed, checked by Charles Martel, who gained
“ a signal victory over them, in a bloody action,
“ near the city of Poitiers, A. D. 732. But the
“ vanquished spoilers soon recovered their strength
“ and their ferocity, and returned with new vio-
“ lence to their devastations. This engaged
“ Charlemagne to lead a formidable army into
“ Spain, with a design to deliver that whole
“ country from the oppressive yoke of the Sara-
“ cens; but, this grand enterprize, though it did
“ not entirely miscarry, was not, however, at-
“ tended with the signal success, that was ex-
“ pected from it. The inroads of this warlike
“ people, were felt by many of the western pro-
“ vinces, besides those of France and Spain.

Several

“ Several parts of Italy suffered from their incur-
 “ sions ; the island of Sardinia was reduced under
 “ their yoke, and Sicily was ravaged and oppressed
 “ by them in the most inhuman manner. Hence
 “ the Christian religion, in Spain and Sardinia,
 “ suffered inexpressibly under these violent u-
 “ surpers.”

Page 381. “ The Saracens had now (in the
 “ 9th century) extended their usurpations, with
 “ an amazing success. Masters of Asia, a few
 “ provinces excepted, they pushed their conquests
 “ to the extremities of India, and obliged the
 “ greatest part of Africa to receive their yoke ;
 “ nor were their enterprizes, in the west, without
 “ effect, since Spain and Sardinia submitted to
 “ their arms, and fell under their dominion.
 “ But their conquests did not end here ; for, in
 “ the year 827, by the treason of Euphemius,
 “ they made themselves masters of the rich and
 “ fertile island of Sicily ; and, towards the con-
 “ clusion of this century, the Asiatic Saracens
 “ seized upon several cities of Calabria, and spread
 “ the terror of their victorious arms, even to the
 “ very walls of Rome, while Crete, Corfica, and
 “ other adjacent islands were either joined to
 “ their possessions or laid waste by their incur-
 “ sions.”

Page 467, “ Sicily had been groaning under
 “ the dominion of the Saracens since the 9th

" century, nor had the repeated attempts of the
 " Greeks and Latins to dispossess them of that
 " rich and fertile country, been hitherto crowned
 " with the desired success. But, in this century
 " the face of affairs changed entirely in that is-
 " land; for in the year 1059, Robert Guiscard,
 " who had formed a settlement in Italy, at the
 " head of a Norman colony, and was afterwards
 " created Duke of Apulia, encouraged by the
 " exhortation of the Roman pontiff, Nicholas II.
 " and seconded by the assistance of his brother
 " Roger, attacked with the greatest vigour and
 " intrepidity the Saracens in Sicily; nor did
 " this latter sheathe the victorious sword, before
 " he had rendered himself master of that island;
 " and cleared it absolutely of its former tyrants.
 " As soon as this great work was accomplished,
 " which was not before the year 1090, Count Ro-
 " ger, not only restored to its former glory and
 " lustre the Christian religion, which had been
 " almost totally extinguished under the Saracen
 " yoke, but also established bishopricks, &c.
 " throughout that province."

Page 476. " The Saracens in Spain, opposed
 " the progress of the gospel, in a different, yet
 " still more pernicious way. They used all sorts
 " of methods to allure the Christians into the
 " profession of Mahometanism, alliances of mar-
 " riage, advantageous contracts, flattering re-
 " wards

“wards were employed to seduce, them with too much success, for great numbers fell into these fatal snares, and apostatized from the truth.”

During the whole period of this trumpet, from the seventh to the eleventh century, the church of Rome was strongly marked by all that idolatry and superstition, and all these vices mentioned in verses, 20 and 21, as the reader will see, at great length by looking into Mosheim's Church History on these centuries. From that history I shall extract only a few short passages.

Century 7th, page 324. “In the earlier periods of the church, the worship of Christians was confined to the one supreme God, and his son Jesus Christ; but the Christians of this century multiplied the objects of their devotion, and paid homage to the remains of the true cross, to the images of saints, and to bones, whose real owners were extremely dubious.”

Century 8, page 342. “The many and stupendous miracles, which are said to have been wrought by the Christian missionaries, who were sent to convert the barbarous nations have lost, in our times, the credit they obtained in former times. The corrupt discipline, that then prevailed, admitted of those fallacious stratagems, which are very improperly called pious frauds; nor did the heralds of the gospel think it at all unlawful to terrify or allure to
“the

“ the profession of Christianity, by fictitious prodigies, those obdurate hearts, which they could not subdue by reason and argument.”

Century 8, page 368. “ Of all the controversies, which agitated and perplexed the Christian church, during this century, that which arose concerning the worship of images in Greece, and was carried from thence into both the eastern and western provinces, was the most unhappy and pernicious in its consequences.”

Century 9th, page 389. “ The impiety and licentiousness of the greatest part of the clergy arose at this time to an enormous height, and stand upon record, in the unanimous complaints of the most candid and impartial writers of the century.—In the western provinces, the bishops were become voluptuous and effeminate to a very high degree. They passed their lives amidst the splendour of courts, and the pleasures of a luxurious indolence, which corrupted their taste, extinguished their zeal, and rendered them incapable of performing the solemn duties of their function ; while the inferior clergy were sunk in licentiousness, minded nothing but sensual gratifications, and infected with the most heinous vices, the flock, whom it was the very business of their ministry to preserve or deliver from the contagion of iniquity.”

Cent.

Cent. ix. page 402. "The ignorance and corruption that dishonoured the Christian church in this century, were great beyond measure; and were there no other examples of their enormity upon record than the single instance of that stupid veneration that was paid to the bones and carcases of departed saints, this would be sufficient to convince us of the deplorable progress of superstition. This idolatrous devotion was now considered as the most sacred and momentous branch of religion, nor did any one dare to entertain the smallest hopes of finding the Deity propitious before they had assured themselves of the protection and intercession of some one or other of the saintly order."

Cent. x. page 446. "To those who consider the primitive dignity and the solemn nature of the ministerial character, the corruptions of the clergy must appear deplorable beyond all expression. These corruptions were mounted to the most enormous height in that distant period of the church, which we have now before us. Both in the eastern and western provinces, the clergy were, for the most part, composed of a most worthless set of men, shamefully illiterate and stupid, ignorant, more especially in religious matters, equally enslaved to sensuality and superstition, and capable of the most abominable and flagitious deeds."

Page 452. " Besides the reproach of the gross-
" est ignorance which the Latin clergy in this cen-
" tury so justly deserve, they were also chargea-
" ble in a very heinous degree with two other o-
" dious and enormous vices, even concubinage
" and simony, which the greatest part of the
" writers of these unhappy times acknowledge
" and deplore. As to the first of these vices, it was
" practised too openly to admit of any doubt."

Such is the just but horrid picture which the historians have drawn of the idolatries, superstitions and vices of the church of Rome, during the period of the sixth trumpet. If John had lived in that period, and written the history of that church in it, he would not have expressed it in more exact and comprehensive terms than he has done in the prophecy contained in verses 20 and 21, which was written six hundred years before the commencement of that period. John adds, that they repented not of their idolatry, nor of their vices. Whoever looks into the history of that church, in every age from that period to the present one, shall find this prediction exactly accomplished. The fact is so well known, that it scarcely stands in need of proof. I shall therefore produce only a very few passages from the history of the 11th and 12th centuries, the times immediately succeeding the termination of this period. Those who wish for farther satisfaction,

satisfaction, will obtain it by consulting the historians in the following centuries.

Mosheim *Hist.* cent. xi. p. 485. "The records of
 " this century loudly complain of the vices that
 " reigned among the rulers of the church, and in ge-
 " neral among all the sacerdotal orders; they also de-
 " plore that universal decay of piety and discipline
 " that was the consequence of this corruption in a
 " set of men who were bound to support by their
 " example, their authority, and their instruction,
 " the sacred interests of religion and virtue. The
 " western bishops were no sooner elevated to the
 " rank of dukes, counts, and nobles, and enrich-
 " ed with ample territories, than they gave them-
 " selves up entirely to the dominion of pleasure and
 " ambition, and wholly employed in displaying
 " the magnificence of their temporal stations, fre-
 " quented the courts of princes, accompanied al-
 " ways with a splendid train of attendants and
 " domestics. The inferior orders of the clergy
 " were also licentious in their own way, few of
 " them preserved any remains of piety and virtue,
 " we might add, of decency and discretion. While
 " their rulers were wallowing in luxury, and bask-
 " ing in the beams of worldly pomp and splendour,
 " they were indulging themselves without the least
 " sense of shame, in fraudulent practices, in im-
 " pure and lascivious gratifications, and even in the
 " commission of the most flagitious crimes.

Page 525. "It is not necessary to draw at full length the hideous portrait of the religion of this age. It may easily be imagined that its features were full of deformity, when we consider that its guardians were equally destitute of knowledge and virtue, and that the heads and rulers of the Christian church, instead of exhibiting models of piety, held forth in their conduct scandalous examples of the most flagitious crimes. The people were sunk in the grossest superstition, and employed all their zeal in the worship of images and relics, and in the performance of a trifling round of ceremonies, which were imposed upon them by the tyranny of a despotic priesthood."

Cent xii. page 571. "Wherever we turn our eyes among the various ranks and orders of the clergy, we perceive in this century the most flagrant marks of licentiousness and fraud, ignorance, and luxury, and other vices whose pernicious effects were deeply felt both in church and state. If we except a very small number who retained a sense of the sanctity of their vocation, and lamented the corruption and degeneracy of their order, it may be said with respect to the rest, that their whole business was to satisfy their lusts, to multiply their privileges by grasping perpetually at new honours and distinctions, to increase their

“ their opulence, to diminish the authority, and to
 “ encroach upon the privileges of princes and ma-
 “ gistrates, and neglecting entirely the interests of
 “ religion and the care of souls, to live in ease and
 “ pleasure, and to draw out their days in an un-
 “ manly and luxurious indolence.

Page 593. “ When we consider the multitude
 “ of causes which united their influence in obscur-
 “ ing the lustre of genuine Christianity, and cor-
 “ rupting it by a profane mixture of the inven-
 “ tions of superstitious and designing men with
 “ its pure and sublime doctrines, it will appear sur-
 “ prising that the religion of Jesus was not totally
 “ extinguished. All orders contributed, though
 “ in different ways, to corrupt the native purity of
 “ religion. The Roman pontiffs led the way, they
 “ would not suffer any doctrines that had the
 “ smallest tendency to diminish their despotic au-
 “ thority ; but obliged the public teachers to in-
 “ terpret the precepts of Christianity in such a
 “ manner as to render them subservient to the sup-
 “ port of Papal dominion and tyranny. This or-
 “ der was so much the more terrible, in that
 “ such as refused to comply with it, and to force
 “ the words of scripture into significations totally
 “ opposite to the intention of its divine Author ;
 “ such, in a word, as had the courage to place the
 “ authority of the gospel above that of the Roman

“ pontiffs, and to consider it as the supreme rule of
“ their conduct, were answered with the formida-
“ ble arguments of fire and sword, and received
“ death in the most cruel forms, as the fruit of
“ their sincerity and resolution.”

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

V I S I O N IV.

Verses 1st, 2d, 3d.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire. And he had in his hand a little book open : and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth. And he cried with a loud voice, as when a lion roareth : and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices.

This chapter and the following one to verse 13th, contain an account of the fourth vision which John saw. In the following part of this book are recorded the prophecies which were contained in that part of the book which Christ opened, which extends from the seventh seal to the end of the roll. And this chapter is an introduction to that part of this book.

The

The angel whom John saw here, is Jesus Christ the angel of the covenant. All the lines in this hieroglyphic unite in forming the true features of his character: and they form features which can agree to no other character.

He is styled a "mighty or powerful angel." In his divine nature, Christ is omnipotent; and in his mediatorial character, "all power in heaven and in earth is given unto him." He comes down from heaven, "for verily the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us."

He is "clothed with a cloud," because the Christian church, the mystical body of Christ shall be under a thick cloud, during the long period of Papal tyranny, for 1243 years; to which this chapter is an introduction.

"A rainbow was upon his head," to signify, that the church should not be totally drowned by the deluge which should proceed from that cloud, but that Christ should remember his covenant, "that his church is built upon a rock, and that the gates of hell shall never prevail against it."

"His face was as it were the sun." All created angels are like the stars only, because their light or knowledge is derived from God, the center and source of all intelligence and wisdom; but Christ is like the sun, his lustre is underived, it is inherent, because he is divine. "We beheld his glory, the glory as
" of

" of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace
" and truth."

" And his feet as pillars of fire," to mark the perfect purity of his steps, even in the most trying situations in this world. In chap. i 15. it is said of Christ; that " his feet are like unto fine brass, as " if they burned in a furnace ;" and in verse 16th, " his countenance was as the sun shineth in his " strength." These are two of the symbols in this hieroglyphic.

He is said to " cry as a lion roareth." A beast of prey is the hieroglyphic for a temporal king or kingdom. The lion is the king of the forest ; hence, it is the symbol of Christ in the character of the temporal governor of the world. " The king of kings " and Lord of Lords." The angel mentioned in this chapter is stiled a strong angel, and is said to cry with a loud voice like a lion, also, to shew that he is the same personage who in chap. v and 5, is stiled, " The lion of the tribe of Juda," to whom the sealed book was delivered, and who opened it ; and, that the little book now in his hand is the last part of that same book.

" He had in his hand, a little book open." The word, which in our translation is *open*, is, in the original *ἀνεγμύριον*, which signifies *opened*. By this expression, it is intimated that this little book had not been delivered open to this angel originally ; but that it had been opened by
him,

him, before the time John saw it in his hand, in this fourth vision. In a former vision, chap. v. John saw a book in the hand of God, written within, and on the back side, and sealed with seven seals: he saw Jesus Christ, styled the lion of the tribe of Juda, receive the book from the hand of God, and he was assured that none but Jesus could open that book; and, that he both could and would open it. In chap. vi. he informs us that Jesus opened six of the seals of that book; and he tells us what was contained under each of these seals. In chap. viii. he informed us that he opened the seventh seal, but he hath not yet told us all that is contained under that seal. Hence, the little book opened in the hand of Christ, is that part of the large book, which he received, as in chap. v. and which he had opened as in chap. vi. and viii, which comprehends the whole of that part of the roll, that extends from the seventh seal to the end of the roll.

It was formerly shewn that the book sealed with seven seals, was the prophecy concerning the rise, height, and downfall of the Roman empire under all its various forms of government, and the sufferings and triumph of the church of Christ in this world; the outlines of which Daniel had drawn in his prophecies; but, which he was commanded to seal up to the time of the end. But many of these things have not yet
been

been revealed under the first six seals; whereas, they follow in their regular order in the following chapters of this book. And these chapters are the things which are contained in this opened book, both of which shall appear as we proceed. Hence, this little opened book is that part of the roll, which was unfolded by the opening of the seventh seal.

“He set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth.” The sea is the symbol for great multitudes of people, in a fluctuating and unsettled state, and the earth is the symbol for the Roman empire, as was formerly shewn. When a man walks or leaps, his right foot is placed before his left, is the first which is lifted up; and, consequently is the first, which is put down again upon the ground. By Christ’s setting his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot upon the earth, it is declared that the scene of the events to which this chapter is introductory shall be first a fluctuating and unsettled state, and secondly, a settled and regularly constituted state of the western world. The first of these was that, in which the Roman empire, overrun and overturned by the irruption of the barbarous nations, was dissolved, for a considerable time, and the inhabitants of the western world were in a most fluctuating and unsettled state. And the second was that, in which the Roman empire was restored

voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to found, the mystery of God should be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets."

The thunders are called seven, to signify that the wars predicted by them should be complete, such as finish. For that is the symbolical meaning of seven. These wars, in one sense completed the overthrow of Rome, in its heathen state; and, in another sense they were the types of those wars which, under the seventh trumpet shall complete its final overthrow.

"I was about to write." By this expression, John declares that he considered these thunders as the whole thunders foretold chap. viii. 5. which were to be accompanied with lightnings and an earthquake, and was just about to write them down accordingly. In this way, John foretells, what the opinion of men in general should be of these wars, when they should happen. When they should see Rome overthrown by them; they should conclude that it is the last revolution of Rome; and, that the empire should rise no more. Such in fact was the conclusion many drew from these incursions of the barbarous nations, which put an end to the Roman government under its sixth head, that of the emperors.

There have not been wanting some, who in latter

ter times have represented that overthrow of Rome as the one foretold in this book, by the overthrow of the last head of Roman government, that thus they might screen the head of Papal government. The entertaining, or at least publishing this opinion, is a confirmation of the truth of this prophecy, since it is intimated in these words of John, that they should do so. But the following parts of this passage declare, that such an opinion is erroneous, for the total and final overthrow of Rome was to be long posterior to the time when the imperial government should be destroyed by these wars of the barbarous nations.

“ And I heard a voice from heaven,” &c. These wars however destructive to the imperial government of Rome, should not be the wars which shall finally overthrow the Roman empire in that last head of it, which, so far as Rome is concerned, is the principal object of this prophecy. It shall be overthrown by wars, of which, in many respects, these are striking types. The armies who dissolved the Roman empire in its imperial state, first came from the other side of the Euphrates, chap. ix. 14, and these which shall finally overthrow Rome in its Papal state, shall also come from the other side of the Euphrates, chap. xvi. 12,—11. Those armies totally destroyed the Roman empire under its imperial form, and these shall totally destroy it under its papal form. Imperial Rome was
destroyed

destroyed by those men, upon whom in the pride of her civil elevation she looked down with contempt as barbarians ; and Papal Rome shall be finally overthrown by those men, upon whom in her religious pride and vain infallibility, she had looked down as barbarians, (heretics), in point of religion.

But the resemblance of these wars to those by which Papal Rome shall be finally overthrown, shall be more evident, when the time for that great event shall come. When that time shall come, and when the great antitype of these sealed thunders or wars shall appear, is declared in verses 5th, 6th, and 7th.

A wrong translation of the last clause of verse 6th hath rendered the true meaning of these verses undiscoverable by those persons who are unacquainted with the Greek language. In our translation it is said, "That there should be time no longer." The words in the original are, *ὅτι χρόνος οὐκ ἔσται ἔτι*. The real meaning of which is, "That the time shall not be yet." Jesus having commanded John to seal up these thunders, and not to write them down as a prediction of the final overthrow of Rome, assigns as the reason of this prohibition, that the time of its final overthrow shall not be yet, but that it should come when the seventh angel should sound his trumpet. Thus, Christ in the most solemn manner declared, that the time of
the

the final overthrow of Rome should not be at the period when the imperial government ceased. In predicting this, he solemnly appeals to the true God, "to him that liveth for ever and ever, who
" created heaven and the things that therein are,
" the earth and the things that therein are, and
" the sea and the things which are therein."

By the manner of this appeal to God, he intimates the following things. First, that when imperial Rome shall be totally overthrown by the barbarous nations, it shall be exceedingly difficult to convince men, that Rome is not then finally overthrown. Such a solemn asseveration is used only when men will not credit a simple assertion. Second, the certainty and truth of this prediction : for an oath is the last thing to which men resort, to make witnesses tell the truth. Third, however difficult it may be, and to men it may appear impossible, that Rome should rise again, after having been buried so long and so deep under her own ruins, and should after all be overthrown with a much more terrible destruction ; yet all these difficulties should neither prevent nor retard the accomplishment of this prediction. For it was made in the name, and shall be accomplished by the power of him who is present at all times and in all places, who created the heaven, the earth, the seas and the fullness thereof. Certainly he, who raised Rome from the narrow and rude foundation laid by Romulus and
Remus

Remus to the height of her imperial greatness, and who completely overthrew her by the incursions of the barbarous nations, could raise her from these ruins to the summit of Papal magnificence and authority, and as easily overthrow her at the sound of the trumpet of the seventh angel, never to rise more. He who made worlds out of nothing, and can by dissolving their elements make them to rush into their original chaos, can never be at a loss to raise Papal Rome out of the long mouldered dust of imperial Rome, and in his appointed time dissolve Papal Rome, never more to be restored. He who liveth for ever and ever can exert as great power in any future time, and in any place, as he hath exerted in any time that is past.

Let it be observed here, that it is Christ that raised Rome from her ruins, preserves her still from final destruction, and shall preserve her till the days of the voice of the seventh angel. For it was he who swore, "that the time of her final overthrow should not be yet." If he had not made this declaration, she must have finally perished when overthrown by the barbarous nations. But the same interposition of Christ which hath certainly revived, and which still preserves her, shall as certainly overthrow her at the predicted time. Ye votaries of Rome! learn hence no more to rage against Christ and his true worshippers, for to him you are indebted for all those things in which you glory,

glory, and for your very existence as a hierarchy. If he had not lifted up his hand to heaven, and declared that the time of your destruction should not be yet, all the powers of hell and earth could not have revived or supported you. Learn too to kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish when he shall lift up his rod of iron. Ye Protestant Christians, who have sometimes more zeal than knowledge, think it not strange that Rome still continues. Who can totally overthrow her, so long as that divine Jesus who preserves you preserves her also? Though you cannot now see all the reasons why Christ preserves Papal Rome so long, you may be certain that they are good ones; for he always acts on the best reasons. Imitate not that church, in attempting to destroy her by fire and sword. You can no more destroy her till the days of the voice of the seventh angel, than she can at any time destroy the church of Christ; and for the same reason, because Christ hath sworn that the time of her destruction is not yet. Remember too, that the weapons of your warfare are not carnal but spiritual. While you put on the whole defensive armour of God, of which you have an inventory in Ephesians vi. 14,—17. lift up no other offensive weapon against Rome, or all your other spiritual enemies, than the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Indulge not a secret wish that fire may come down from heaven and destroy these men, lest Christ should rebuke you

as he once did two of his disciples, when they asked permission from him to call down fire from heaven to destroy the Samaritan idolaters for rejecting Christ, and for their aversion to Jerusalem, saying unto them, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."—Let us now return to the narrative.

When the imperial government was overthrown, Rome ceased for some hundred years to be a seat of government, and for all that time was not ranked among the kingdoms of the world. During that time, the men of the world concluded that it should never more rise to the rank of a kingdom. But Jesus solemnly foretold that it should, and his words cannot fail. Since that time, Rome became again the seat of government, and for a long time under the Papal head, swayed a more extensive and despotic sceptre than ever imperial Rome had done in all her boasted greatness. Rome still exists as a kingdom, and is still the seat of government, for the time fixed by Christ for her final overthrow is not yet come. That time, Christ tells us, shall not come till the seventh angel sounds his trumpet.

What period of time corresponds to the days of the seventh angel, shall be shewn in its proper place in the commentary on chap. xi. 15,—19. Let it be observed only here in general, that it is yet

yet above 200 years to that time. Hence Rome is not yet overthrown, and shall not be till that time come.

In the days of the seventh angel, the thunders which are now sealed up shall be loosed from their seal. Then the wars which shall finally overthrow Rome shall arise; and the kings of the east shall cross the Euphrates, to execute the judgments of God upon Papal Rome. Accordingly, chap. xi. 19. under the seventh trumpet it is said, "There were lightnings, and voices, and thunders, and an earthquake, and great hail."

It is said, that "when the seventh angel shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished." In 1 Corinthians ii. 7,—16. that true religion of Jesus, which the Spirit of God only effectually teaches to the mind, and the true nature and excellency of which those only perceive who are renewed in the spirit of their minds, by the Spirit of God, is styled a mystery. In Rom. xi. 25,—36. the infidelity of the Jews, the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Jews, are styled a mystery. In 2 Thess. ii. 7. all that ambition, superstition, and tyranny, which characterise the Papal hierarchy, are styled a mystery. All these are comprehended under the mystery of God; as is evident from those things which are actually unfolded under the seventh trumpet, chap. xi. 15,—19. All these are great mysteries. They

are declared to be mysteries by God himself, in the sacred scriptures. They are great mysteries under the moral government of God. That a religion so true, so pure, so excellent as the Christian, should be neglected, misunderstood, and despised by so many; that so few, comparatively speaking, should be renewed by the Spirit of God in the spirit of their minds; that the Jews, the antient people of God, should remain so long in a state of infidelity; that those who profess a great regard for Moses and the prophets should not believe in Jesus, of whom Moses and the prophets testified; that they should for so long a time remain distinct from all the nations of the earth, and yet live in no country as a distinct nation; that it should be so many hundred years before all the Gentile nations should be converted to that divine religion, whose very doctrines prove it to be of God, and which calls upon men only to be wise, to be good, and to be happy, whilst it offers them the best means and aids for becoming so; that such a hierarchy of superstition, idolatry, worldly pomp, and persecution as the church of Rome exhibits, should arise in the world, bear the name of Christian, and continue for so many hundred years; that after so many hundred years, the overthrow of that hierarchy, the bringing in of the fullness of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, and that uncommonly great influence of the Spirit of God

God upon the minds of men, in renewing them, making them clearly perceive the truth and excellency of the gospel of Jesus and heartily embrace it, should all happen at the same time, are great mysteries. These are mysteries under the moral government of God. These are mysteries, at many of the reasons of which we might hazard many probable conjectures, if to do so were right; but all the reasons of which shall fully appear to no man, until the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when this mystery of God shall be finished. When Antichrist shall be finally overthrown, when the fullness of the Gentiles shall be brought in, the Jews, seeing that Christ's kingdom is triumphant over the Roman empire and all the other kingdoms of the world, shall receive him as their spiritual king; and when the religion of Jesus, in its scriptural and divine purity, shall become universal and triumphant in the world, then shall it clearly appear, that all these mysteries arose from the wisest and best reasons. Then shall the contemplation of these predictions and events improve the heads and the hearts of men, and fill their mouths with songs of praise to that God, all whose works, even the most mysterious, are done in wisdom.

That the mystery of God should not be finished till the voice of the seventh angel, is a declaration exactly agreeable to the predictions of the prophets who wrote on this subject, before John wrote
this

this book. Thus, Daniel chap. vii. 23,—27. expressly declares, that it shall be a time and times, and half a time, from the day in which the saints of the Most High shall be delivered into the hands of the last head of the Roman government, to the day, in which the mystery of God shall be finished, that is, the space of 1243 years. It shall afterwards be shewn in its proper place, that that space of time shall run down exactly to the days of the voice of the seventh angel. The same thing is foretold by the apostle Paul in Rom. xi. 25,—26. and in 2 Thess. ii. 1,—10. Let us here observe and admire the exact correspondence among the writers of sacred scripture; a correspondence which proves, that they all wrote under the inspiration of the same unerring spirit of God; a correspondence, which, by comparing one of them with another, leads the candid and studious mind to their real meaning.

Verses 8th, 9th, 10th.—And the voice which I heard from heaven, spake unto me again, and said, Go, and take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which standeth upon the sea, and upon the earth. And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall

shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

John is commanded to take the little opened book which is in the hand of Christ, and eat it up. And he takes it, and eats it wholly up. As the food of the body must be eaten before it can afford any nourishment to the body; hence, to store up and digest knowledge in the mind, which is the food of the soul, is expressed in the symbolical language by eating. This symbol is very common in prophetic writings, and its meaning is uniformly the same. To eat words, is to know their meaning, store them up in our memory, and apply them to their proper use. Jerem. xv. 16. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them." To eat a roll or book, is to study it diligently, store up its meaning in our memory, and digest it fully: Ezek. iii. 1. "Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go and speak unto the house of Israel."

When all the six preceeding seals were opened in their order, John saw what was written upon those parts of the roll, which were unfolded
by

by the opening of these seals, and he related exactly what he had seen written upon them. When this seventh seal was opened, he read and considered this little book, digested fully its meaning, and narrated the contents of it, at great length, in symbolical language, in many of the following chapters of this book.

When he eat this book, it was sweet as honey in his mouth ; but it was afterwards bitter in his belly. The acquisition of knowledge is pleasant. There is a natural curiosity in man, which makes him pry into futurity with keenness and pleasure, and renders every discovery pleasant at first, merely because it is new. Great are the charms of novelty to a mind so constituted, that what it knows bears little proportion to what it knows not. But, after it is attained, the knowledge of futurity is often distressing to the mind. The knowledge of all the calamities and vicissitudes of his life at one view, before they actually approached him, would distress and overwhelm the strongest of men. The foreknowledge of the wickedness which, to such a degree, and for so great a length of time, should prevail in the world, under the reign of superstition, idolatry, and tyranny, of the persecutions and calamities, to which the saints, of whom the world was not worthy, should be exposed so long, must certainly imbitter and distress the mind of John. The
publication

publication of truth, also, is often the occasion of uneasiness to the publisher. Men blinded by prejudice, guided by worldly interest, and stimulated by passion, too often treat their best friends as their enemies; for telling them the truth. A Paul was obliged, Gall iv. xvi, thus, to exclaim, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth."

In particular, the writing of the things contained in that little book or roll, which John stored up in his mind, should draw much odium upon his memory; and lead many to call in question his inspiration, rather than admit the truth of prophecies, which draw their true character in those deformed features, which so exactly agree to the life. And he, who, having with pleasure to himself studied and digested them, shall be so honest, so bold, and so friendly as to explain in clear and unequivocal terms, their true meaning, must draw upon himself much odium and misrepresentation from those, who are painted in certain colours in this book. Though, with the benevolence of a Christian, he should tell them the truth from the best motives, and should pray as well as write for their best interest; misled by prejudice; worldly interest or passion, they would treat him as an enemy. They would thus afford him another opportunity of imitating the master whom he serves, who when reviled, reviled not again, and who

prayed for his unprovoked and relentless foes, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." But none of these considerations must hinder John from prophecying, nor his commentators from explaining unpalatable truths. For Christ, notwithstanding that bitterness, commands him to prophecy again.

Verse 11th.—And he said unto me, thou must prophecy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

In the preceding part of this book, John had prophesied before one great people only; the Romans. They were the masters of the then known world. At least, the Roman empire was the only monarchy, known in prophecy, at that time, existing in the world. It was the fourth beast in Daniel's prophecy. But, in the periods to which the following parts of this book relate, the state of the world should be very different. It was not to consist of one universal empire, like the antient Roman; called in this book *the earth*; nor, was it like the first incursions of the barbarous nations, to be in so unsettled and fluctuating a state, as to be denominated the sea. But it should consist of many distinct and established nations and kingdoms independent of each other; whose

whose inhabitants should speak different languages.

This state of the world, in this period of its history, was predicted by Daniel, in that short sketch which he drew of this book, Dan. vii. 24, "And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise." These many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, did in fact arise at the time the last head of Roman government, the papal, took for its seat, the ancient city of Rome. Europe hath ever since that day, been divided; and still is divided into many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings. Their languages, and the constitutions of their governments are as different, as the descriptions of them in this verse are. The form of government of some of them is republican, styled peoples; of some monarchical, styled kings; and of others mixed, styled nations; and the languages which they speak, differ more from one another than their forms of government do. To all these modern European kingdoms, the predictions in the following part of the book, relate in certain respects, as shall appear as we proceed, so that, on this account, John is said to prophecy before them.

C H A P. XI.

V I S I O N V.

Verses, 1st, 2d, **A**ND there was given me a reed like unto a rod ; and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple, leave out, and measure it not ; for it is given unto the Gentiles : and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

This chapter, by the symbols of measuring the temple, of the two witnesses prophecy in sackcloth 1260 days, of the Gentiles treading the holy city under their feet 42 months ; of the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit, making war with the two witnesses, and of the opening of the temple of God in heaven, presents us with a very comprehensive view of the situation of Christ's church, for the space of 1243 years.

The temple was the stated place of public worship
among

among the Jews.---Jerusalem, the city in which this temple stood, and to which the tribes of Israel went up three times in the year, to worship God at their great feasts, was therefore stiled the holy or consecrated city. Hence, in the symbolical language the temple signifies the true church of God, and Jerusalem or the holy city, the external and even civil privileges, which are sometimes connected with it ; but of which it may be deprived without any essential hurt being done to its real nature.

By John's measuring the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein, whilst he is commanded to leave out the court that is without the temple, it is predicted that, during the period of the 42 months mentioned in these verses, God shall have a church and true worshippers in the world ; and though with them, the essentials of religion shall be found, they shall appear outwardly small and mean, when compared with the extent and grandeur of a certain church, which shall arise, in the world, at the commencement of that period, and shall continue to the end of it.

In the inner court of the temple, stood the altar of burnt offering, in that court, the priests offered sacrifice, and the Levites performed their offices. The next court was the court of Israel, into which every Israelite who was purified, had a right of admission, and none except Israelites could be admitted. And the outer court was the court of
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the Gentiles, into which the Gentiles were allowed to enter. Hence, though the temple, the altar, and they that worship therein, are small and few, when compared with the outer court, the holy city, and the Gentiles, yet these are the symbols of the true church, of the right worship, and of the true worshippers of God. John did not measure any of the most magnificent heathen temples, but only, the temple of God. He thus shewed that this church should not consist of commandments of men taught as doctrines; should not be distinguished by those gaudy outward ornaments, which accord to the littleness of human genius, and to the undue influence, which, in his present depraved state, the bodily faculties of man have over his spiritual ones in the matters of religion, but, which are quite beneath the greatness and spirituality of the divine nature, and of that worship which accords to God as the pure and perfect spirit.

The altar was none of those on which the votaries of the Heathen deities offered sacrifice, it was the altar which stood in the temple of God. For the votaries of this church shall hope for the pardon of their sins, not in consequence of such things as sacrifices of the mass, penances, the intercession of departed, or the prayers of surviving saints, to waft them through purgatory with a gentle gale; but only in consequence of the sacrifice of Christ
the

the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world. They know, that "Christ died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God;"—"that as there is one God, so there is only one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;"—"that there is no salvation in any other, no other name given under heaven among men, whereby we can be saved but the name of Jesus;"—"and that he is able to save unto the uttermost all who come unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

"And them that worship therein." Before the altar none worshipped but the priests and the Levites. In the temple none worshipped but the Israelites who were purified. The worshippers whom John marked out by this symbol, are those, who in the language of the New Testament are styled kings and priests unto God, and Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile. They are such, who far from satisfying themselves with a name to live whilst they are dead, far from amusing themselves with the vain parade of empty shew in matters of religion, believe, esteem, love, and obey the truth; practise virtue in all its branches, as it respects God, their neighbour, and themselves; worship God in spirit and in truth, through the mediation of Christ; walk before the Searcher of hearts with uprightness of heart; in the honest and diligent use
of

of every means of knowledge and grace which God places within the reach of their power; implore and depend upon the blessing of God, and agency of his Spirit, to work in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure, and in every situation enjoy God as their chief good.

Whilst this comparatively small church and these few worshippers are measured off and marked out as his inheritance, an inheritance, of which devils and wicked men for 1243 years, shall attempt in vain to rob him with sacrilegious hands, a church of much greater extent and outward shew shall arise in the world.

He is commanded to leave out the court which is without the temple, "for it is given to the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot 42 months." By the Gentiles, is meant the church of Rome. The votaries of this church are called *Gentiles*, in opposition to the true worshippers of God, who in the symbolical language are called *Jews*. While the true worshippers of God, like the Jews of old, make the oracles of God the sole standard of their religion and worship; the votaries of that church, like the Gentiles, regulate their religion and worship by antient customs, the prejudices of the vulgar, and the dictates of their priests. Particularly, they are called Gentiles on account of the external shew and pomp of their worship, and of those superstitions and ceremonies which
that

that church hath in fact borrowed from the Gentile or Heathen worship. Every one acquainted with the heathen theology, and with the superstitions of that church, must clearly perceive that the latter are derived from the former. This may not only be deduced from historians of established character, but it is also expressly asserted by them.

Thus Mosheim, *Church Hist.* Cent. iv. vol. i. page 191. "A ridiculous precipitation in receiving new opinions, a preposterous desire of imitating the *Pagan rites*, and of blending them with the Christian worship, and that idle propensity which the generality of mankind have towards a gaudy and ostentatious religion, all contributed to establish the reign of superstition on the ruins of Christianity.—The public processions and superstitions, by which the *Pagans* endeavoured to appease their gods, were now adopted into the Christian worship, and celebrated with great pomp and magnificence in several places. The virtues that had been formerly ascribed to the *Heathen temples*, to their lustrations, to the statues of their gods and heroes, were now attributed to Christian churches, to water consecrated by certain forms of prayer, and to the images of holy men. And the same privileges that the former enjoyed under the darkness of *Paganism* were conferred upon the latter under the light

“ of the gospel, or rather under the cloud of su-
“ perstition that was obscuring its glory. It is
“ true, that as yet images were not very common,
“ nor were there any statues at all. But it is at
“ the same time as undoubtedly certain, as it is
“ extravagant and monstrous, that the worship of
“ the martyrs was modelled by degrees, accord-
“ ing to the religious services that were paid to the
“ gods before the coming of Christ.”

Cent. v. page 249. “ As there were none in
“ these times to hinder the Christians from retain-
“ ing the opinions of their *Pagan* ancestors con-
“ cerning departed souls, heroes, demons, temples,
“ and such like matters, and even transferring them
“ into their religious services; and as, instead of
“ entirely abolishing the rites and institutions of
“ antient times, these institutions were still observ-
“ ed, with some slight alterations; all this swelled,
“ of necessity, the torrent of superstition, and de-
“ formed the beauty of the Christian religion and
“ worship with those corrupt remains of *Paganism*
“ which still subsist in a certain church. It will not
“ be improper to observe here, that the famous
“ *Pagan* doctrine concerning the purification of
“ departed souls by means of a certain kind of
“ fire, was more amply explained and confirmed
“ now, than it had formerly been. Every body
“ knows, that this doctrine proved an inexhausti-
“ ble source of riches to the clergy through the
“ succeeding

“succeeding ages, and that it still enriches the
“Romish church with its nutritious streams.”

The church of Rome are with peculiar propriety styled Gentiles, in the period of time to which this prediction relates, for that is the one in which the Pope was vested with a temporal dominion in Rome, and, as the last head of Roman government, came in the place of the Heathen emperors; the period, during which, in this book he is represented by the hieroglyphic of a ravenous beast, chap. xiii. the symbol of a temporal kingdom.

It will appear, that the holy city which the church of Rome shall tread under foot for 42 months, shall at the end of that period be rescued from their hands, and measured off to the true worshippers of God as certainly as the temple was at the beginning of that period. This will be shewn in the commentary on chap. xxi. 10,—21. Upon the principles established in the commentary on chap. ix. 5. the forty-two months here, are 42 prophetic months, that is, 1260 years. But as each of these years consists of twelve months, and each of these months of 30 days, each year must contain 360 days, which is five days and some fractions less than the solar year, which hath for a considerable time also been the civil year. Therefore five times 1260 days, which is 6300 days or 17 solar years, must be deducted from the 1260

years, by which they will be reduced to 1243 solar years, the exact time represented by the symbolical number of 42 months. During that long period of time, the church of Rome shall appear in great outward pomp and grandeur, and extend over a great part of the world, whilst the church of Christ during the same period, blessed with all the essentials of true religion, shall be stripped of outward magnificence. And during that period, the church of Rome shall be vested with a temporal as well as an ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

But when did these 42 months commence? They commenced at the time the church of Rome was vested with a temporal dominion, and the Popes received the sceptre of the *Heathen emperors*, as their predecessors in the government of Rome. This shall be shewn in its proper place, from a prediction in chap. xiii. 18. to have been the year of Christ 756. And it shall be shewn from authentic history, that in that very year Pepin king of France granted to the Pope and his successors the temporal dominion of Rome, under the name of the patrimony of St. Peter.

For the 1034 years of that time which is past, the church of Christ and the church of Rome have appeared exactly in the situations in which they are represented in this hieroglyphic. And we have no reason to doubt, that those who shall live at the end of that period shall see that this prediction hath been as exactly fulfilled in the last 209 years
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of the period, as it has already been in the first 1034 years of it.

This relative situation of the church of Christ and of the church of Rome, the former worshipping God in spirit and in truth, according to the ordinances of divine institution, without external pomp and shew, the latter regulating their worship by many Heathenish rites with great outward pomp and shew, the former persecuted, and the latter persecuting it for the period of 1243 years, commencing in the year of Christ 750, and consequently ending in the year 1999, is represented by five different hieroglyphics in this, the 12th and 13th chapters of this book, and the precise same period of time fixed in every one of them, though mostly in different expressions.

In this verse, it is represented by the Gentiles treading the holy city under their foot for 42 months;—In the third verse, by Christ's two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth for 1260 days;—in chap. xii. 6. by the woman fed in the wilderness 1265 days;—in chap. xii. 14. by the woman nourished in the wilderness for a time and times and half a time, that is, for three years and an half;—and in chap. xiii. 5. by power given to the Beast to continue 42 months. The smallest attention may satisfy every candid person, that all these five denominations of time signify the same precise length of time. For three years and an half, each year consisting of 12 months, are exactly 42 months. And 42 months, each

The period of this prediction is the same with that of the last one. It is for 1260 days, equal to the 42 months at 30 days in each month, that is 1243 solar years. It is the relative situation of the same parties which is represented; but, in a different point of view. The two witnesses of Christ prophesying in sackcloth, are the symbol for the church of Christ in a persecuted and mourning state. The beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit, is the symbol of the papal hierarchy during the period in which the temporal and the ecclesiastic powers were united in it. A full account of the beast will be given in its proper place in the commentary, on chap. xiii

It is said. that this beast ascendeth, not that it ascended, nor that it shall ascend; to intimate that its rise shall be contemporary with that of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth. That beast makes war against them, and kills them; but they rise again.

In the former hieroglyphic, the church of Christ is represented as stripped of all outward grandeur; and the church of Rome, as adorned in a pompous and magnificent manner. In this, the church of Christ is represented as bearing testimony to the truth, though her votaries are few and persecuted, and the church of Rome is represented as persecuting her; and for a short time apparently overcoming her; but yet she rises

rises again, and, by her rise, the limits of the papal kingdom are greatly contracted.

The least attention to the different parts of this hieroglyphic, may satisfy any person that they are not any two individual persons, who are meant by these two witnesses; first, because no two persons have ever lived so long as 1243 years, the time they are said to prophecy; and secondly, because it is not to be supposed that any individual persons shall rise to life and vigour again, after they have been exposed dead, on an open street, for three days and an half, which, as shall be shewn, is three solar years and an half.

It is the mighty angel mentioned in the preceding chapter, who still speaks in this, and who calls these two witnesses *his* witnesses: But, it was shewn that this mighty angel is Christ; hence, these are *his* two witnesses, and from him they derive the power by which they are enabled to prophecy so long, in so trying a situation. It is by faith in him, by the superintendency of his providence, by the influence of his gospel, and by the agency of his spirit, that he giveth them this power. Christians, in that period, are called Christ's witnesses, because they bear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, and to Jesus himself, that he is the Christ, and the Son of God. Like honest witnesses, they declare the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. An

honest witness will declare neither his own conjectures, nor the hearfays of others, but only those facts which he hath perceived himself. In like manner Christians, as witnesses to the truth, neither believe nor profess, as articles of their faith, their own conjectures and fancies, nor the mere commandments of men; but they believe and profess as such all those truths, and only those, which they perceive to be taught in the sacred scriptures, the word of God. They dare not add to them, nor take from them. They have not the impious vanity to imagine that they can improve the oracles of God, by human additions. Nor are they influenced by that worse than childish cunning, which makes too many think that it is unsafe or imprudent to profess or to teach, what the unerring wisdom of God thought fit to reveal; and, to reveal without any of those cautions, which little minds too often falsely call prudence. Like the apostles of Christ, Acts, xx. 27. "They shun not to declare all the counsel of God." Thus, chap. vi. 9. these martyrs or witnesses, who were slain, are said to have been slain, "for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held."

For the space of 1243 years, commencing in the year 756, all true Christians are stiled, as in this hieroglyphic, witnesses or martyrs; for the word martyr is the one in the original, which
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here and in every other place, is translated *witness*; as all acquainted with the Greek language know. It is not in suffering but in witnessing for the truth, that the essence of martyrdom consists. It is a steady and open attachment to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus. Though a man should give his body to be burned, and have not this testimony, it profiteth him nothing. And he, who firmly believes, and uniformly professes and obeys the truth as it is in Jesus, in this period, is a martyr of Christ, though he should never be called, in the course of divine providence, to seal that testimony with his blood, provided he is one who would do so, if God in his providence should call him to suffer for the truth.

In this period Christians are styled witnesses, chiefly, because their situation, during the 1243 years of it, compared with that of the Christians who shall live in the world after that period, is like that of honest witnesses, during the dependence of a long, intricate, and important trial in a cause of great consequence, in which the passions of many parties and their adherents are deeply engaged; compared with the situation of these same witnesses, after a final sentence hath been passed in the cause, in the most exact conformity to their depositions, by a judge of such established character for abilities, attention, and integrity, as to convince all men of the justice of his sentence;

or, at least, completely to silence the few, who will not yield to conviction. During the dependence of the trial, though these witnesses are fully satisfied in their own minds, that they have told the truth, and concealed no part of it; and, knowing the character of the judge, are perfectly confident that his judgement shall correspond to their testimony; yet, by those persons interested in a contrary decision, and by the great multitude who in most cases form opinions without examining the case, and deliver these with that confidence for which their ignorance only hinders them to blush, they are sometimes represented as ignorant fools, and sometimes as artful and perjured knaves. Some take one side of the question, and others the other. Those, who embrace the wrong side, commonly misrepresent the characters of the witnesses, and of those who embrace the right side. It is not reason, a sound judgement, and a well informed understanding, which make men take the wrong side in any case; but, it is prejudice, private interest, or passion, and in many cases, all the three; and these never fail to make them rail against and misrepresent all who take the opposite side. But, when the final judgement shall be given in terms of their evidence, then, the general opinion shall change, and these witnesses will be treated with that respect, which is due to their upright and well-informed,

formed, but injured characters ; while the unjust aspersions, which the partisans of the other side threw upon them, shall rebound upon their own heads, with double justice and double vengeance.

This is the view of the comparative situation of the church of Christ and of the church of Rome, which is given in this book and in the prophecies of Daniel, which are, by it, unfolded. During this period, Christians are like witnesses ; they declare the truth as in the presence of God and accountable to him. They are misrepresented by those whose prejudices, worldly interests, and passions, engage them on the side of error. They are called heretics, weak men, wild men, fools, artful hypocrites. As bad things are said of them as were said of Christ himself, and the children of the devil could pronounce nothing worse, nor could the devil himself with all his skill and malice dictate any thing worse. Some take one side of the question, and others take the other. Some, with these witnesses, say, that that system of religion which is taught in the sacred scriptures alone, is the religion of Jesus, the kingdom of God ; that kingdom which is not meats and drinks, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; whilst great multitudes say, that that religion which is taught in the church of Rome is the true religion of Jesus, the kingdom of God. From the commencement of this period to the present day, such hath
been

been the conduct of the votaries of both churches, and such shall be their conduct to the end of it. But when at the end of it, the Papal hierarchy shall be completely and finally overthrown; and all the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, then the decisive judgement of God, the sole object of all religious worship, and the only infallible Judge of controversies, shall shew to the whole world, that these witnesses have through the whole of that period declared the truth. Thus, in the symbolical or prophetic language, the end of this period when the Papal hierarchy shall be finally overthrown, and the Christian church established in purity, peace, and triumph, over the whole world, is styled the *judgement of God*. Chap. xiv. 7. "Fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgement is come." Chap. xx. 4. "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgement was given unto them." Chap. xix. 2. "For true and righteous are his judgements; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornications, and hath avenged the blood of his saints at her hands." See also Daniel vii. 23,—27.

These witnesses are *two*, not to signify any two particular persons, or any two churches, but to signify, first, that during this period the votaries of Christianity should be comparatively few; and secondly,

condly, that they should be sufficient to bear evidence to the truth of Christianity. Two is a very small number; but the concurring testimony of two good witnesses is as legal and sufficient evidence as that of 200, or any given number.

During that period, the witnesses for the truth as it is in Christ should be few, but still they should be a sufficient number to attest and prove it. We are not to suppose that true Christians, represented by these two witnesses, were to be equally few during the whole of this period. The contrary is evident from the hieroglyphic. At first their number and power is greater; gradually they become less; then they increase again, and continue to increase to the end of the period. At first their power is marked in strong terms, verses 4th, 5th, and 6th; their number and power greatly diminish; they are killed; they lie dead three days and an half, verses 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th; then they greatly increase, and go on increasing to the end. They become alive, stand on their feet, and ascend to heaven in a cloud, verses 11th, 12th.

These witnesses are to prophesy 1260 days in sackcloth. They are said to prophesy, not because they shall predict new and distant events in consequence of the power of divine inspiration upon their minds, but because in consequence of that information which they have received from God through the means of the sacred scriptures, and the
gracious

gracious and ordinary illumination of their minds by his Spirit qualifying them for perceiving the true meaning of scripture, they firmly believe and openly profess that God will judge and avenge his church even in this world; that the religion which is from God cannot be overthrown by men and devils: and that Christ's kingdom shall undoubtedly come at the time and in the manner predicted in the sacred scriptures. Like those of the prophets of God, their declarations will be despised by many as idle dreams, and they shall be hated and persecuted. *

"Clothed in sackcloth." The period of their prophesying shall be one of persecution and mourning. But at the end of the 1243 years, all their declarations and hopes shall be fully accomplished, and the days of their mourning shall end forever.

They are denominated "The two olive trees" and the two candlesticks standing before the "God of all the earth." In the symbolical language, candlesticks signify churches, chap. i. 20. "And the seven candlesticks which thou sawest, are the seven churches." The lamps which burn in these candlesticks must be supplied with oil. The largest quantity of oil would be exhausted by long and constant consumption. Hence, as oil is made of olives, olive trees are necessary to supply, by their annual crops, the annual waste of oil

oil in the lamps by burning. The two olive trees therefore signify, that that God, who in the course of his providence preserves the vegetable life, and by the growth of vegetables supplies that vegetable food which is constantly needed for the preservation of man and beast, shall, by his providence and grace, effectually provide for the support, illumination, and comfort of his church during this period, in spite of all the power, cunning, and malice of Rome.

They are said to stand before the God of all the earth, because they do not signify any particular constituted churches, but because they signify the church universal, the true Catholic church which consists of every individual person, of whatever outward or visible church he may be through the whole earth, whom God knows to be his true worshipper and servant, and who names the name of Christ and departs from evil.

Such in the symbolical language is the meaning of two candlesticks and two olive trees standing *before the God of all the earth*, when used absolutely, and without any other reference than that which by the term *two* is evidently made to the two witnesses mentioned in the preceding verse, of whom it is said, "these are the two candlesticks and the two olive trees." But they are here used in reference to, and as a citation from, some well known writing, in which mention is made of two

candlesticks and two olive trees standing before the God of all the earth.

This writing is the prophecy of Zechariah, chapters i. ii. iii. iv. especially chapter iv. which the reader is desired to peruse with particular attention. These were Zerubabel the son of Shealtiel, the prince of the captivity, the person who as their governor returned at the head of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, and Joshua the high-priest; who in the last verse of the fourth chapter are called "the two anointed ones" that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

Among the Jews, kings and priests were inaugurated by being anointed with oil; hence Zerubabel as the prince, and Joshua as the high-priest of the Jews at that time, are called the two anointed ones, because they had been admitted into their offices by the anointing with oil. The two together are symbols for Christians, who are kings and priests unto God, and whose very name *Christian* signifies *anointed*. It is borrowed from the name of Christ, which is *anointed*, and which was given to him as the Lord's anointed Prophet, Priest, and King, the whole *anointed offices* being united in perfection in his person. Zerubabel and Joshua were the two persons who had the direction in rebuilding the temple and repairing the city of Jerusalem after the Babylonish captivity, when Jerusalem had long been trodden under foot
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by the Gentiles. They met with great opposition in this work from those who were the servants, and in the pay of the king of Babylon. A stop was thus for some time put to the work by that king, and the most unjust and malevolent aspersions were thrown out against Jerusalem, her kings, and her citizens, by the tools of Babylon. In this situation, an end seemed to be put to the building, and Zerubabel and Joshua were derided by many for their zeal for Jerusalem, and their confident hopes of seeing the house of God rebuilt, and Jerusalem repaired, notwithstanding the opposition of Babylon. At this time, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah were sent by God to encourage these two persons, and to assure them that the work should again be begun, and that they two whose hands had laid the foundation of the temple, should live to see it finished. Accordingly, the building was begun by Zerubabel and Joshua, notwithstanding the prohibition of the king of Babylon; and when the officers of that king came to put a stop to the work, they with the Jews who adhered to them, would not desist; but said to them, (Ezra chap. iv. 11.) "We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and build the house that was builded these many years ago, which a great king of Israel builded and set up." At last, in a manner quite unexpected, and in which the overruling hand of God was very evident, King Darius not

only permitted them to build, but also furnished them with the things necessary for carrying on the work. And the building was finished under the direction and in the days of Zerubabel and Joshua, in the sixth year of the reign of Darius.

The history of these facts is contained, at considerable length in the book of Ezra, chap. i. ii. iii. iv. v. and vi. These chapters well merit the serious perusal of the reader as containing, at once, a very distinct history of a most extraordinary and important event relative to the Jewish nation, and a most striking type of the Christian church, during this period of the two witnesses for 1243 years.

There is something remarkable and striking in the names of these two persons, who conducted the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. Every one acquainted with the Old Testament must have perceived, that names are given neither to persons nor things at random, but are expressive of their natures, characters, offices, or uses. In the Hebrew language, in which they are written, Joshua is the same with Jesus, and both signify a Saviour; and Zerubabel signifies the opposer of Babel or Babylon. In the book of the Revelation, Babylon is a symbol for Papal Rome, the Antichrist; but the opposer of, or the opposite to Antichrist is Christ. Thus Zerubabel and Joshua, in the very import of the names, represent the mystical body of Christ during the period of Papal power;—

power;—those christians, who like Zerubabel and Joshua, adhere to the word of God, and oppose the power and idolatry of Babylon the great, and who, like them are kings and priests unto God.

From this history of Zerubabel and Joshua, the two candlesticks and the two olive trees, which stand by the Lord of the whole earth, it will be evident what is meant by stiling the two witnesses, the two candlesticks and the two olive trees. In this period, Christians are kings and priests unto God, they stand by the God of the whole earth; adhere to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus; are engaged in a war against Papal Rome; shall be few in number; shall be treated with derision, for attempting to build up the church of God in opposition to that power, which rules over the kings of the earth; shall be brought so low, at one time, that the work of building the church of God shall appear to be entirely stopped: But supported, not by might, not by power, but by the spirit of the Lord of hosts, they shall be assisted, in a remarkable manner, in building up the house of God, and from unexpected quarters, even by temporal kings; and they shall thus continue witnesses for the truth, to the end of this period when the temple shall be opened, and the church of Christ shall appear in great splendour and glory.

These witnesses are said to send fire out of their mouths to devour those, who intentionally hurt them,

them, and to have power to smite the earth with all plagues, &c. They shall not fight against their enemies with military weapons, but with spiritual weapons. However, much they shall be despised by the votaries of Rome, many great and striking judgements and plagues shall be brought upon the Roman empire, (the earth) in the course of Divine providence, for the injuries done to these Christians by the Papal hierarchy. These plagues shall be poured out upon the votaries of Rome, in this period; on that account, and in the most striking correspondence to the injuries, which in that period they do to the Christian church. But this will more clearly appear in the commentary, on the pouring out the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, in chap. xvi.

With respect to their power of turning waters into blood, it is said in chap. xvi. 4, 5. " And
" the third angel poured out his vial upon the
" rivers and fountains of water; and they became
" blood. And I heard the angel of the waters say,
" Thou art righteous O Lord, which art and wast
" and shall be, because thou hast judged thus:
" For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink,
" for they are worthy."

Whilst they are perfecting their testimony, the beast which is described in chap. xiii. and which riseth out of the bottomless pit, shall make war against

against them and shall overcome them. A beast of prey signifies a temporal kingdom, as shall be fully shewn in the commentary on chap. xiii. This temporal kingdom shall persecute the Christians; shall in all appearance destroy them; and shall insult their dead bodies. By the great city which is spiritually called Sodom and Egypt, is meant the city of Rome. This city is compared to Sodom for its sensuality, and for its final overthrow in which the hand of God shall be evident, and from which it shall never more rise; and to Egypt for its luxury, idolatry, and persecution of the people of God. This word which is translated the *street* of the great city is *πλατείας* in the original, which signifies *breadth* or *extent*, and ought to have been translated "through the whole extent of the great city." The city does not signify the city of Rome strictly taken, but that government which the city of Rome possessed over so great a part of the world. Hence, the dead bodies lying through the whole extent of the city, signifies that, at a particular time in this period, Christians should appear to be totally destroyed through every part of the world over which the territory of Rome extended. In this respect, it is said of the extent of this city, that our Lord was crucified there. For though he was crucified at Jerusalem, yet that city was then within the extent of the Roman empire, and it was by Pilate, the Roman governor over the conquered

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ed province of Judea, that the unjust sentence of crucifixion was passed on Jesus.

For three days and an half, that is, for three years and an half, Christians shall appear to be thus totally overcome, and the different people, kindreds, tongues and nations, which, at that time, shall inhabit the extent of the Roman empire, shall see them thus oppressed, shall all join in oppressing them, and shall express their rage even against their lifeless corps. This apparent universal, and final destruction of those who had borne testimony to the word of God and to Jesus, shall fill the citizens of Rome, (them who dwell upon the earth), with such great and universal joy, that, in the most hearty and explicit manner, they shall congratulate each other, on the destruction of those who tormented them.

In three years and an half, after the votaries of Rome shall think that Christians are totally destroyed, they shall arise in such an unexpected manner and time, and with such renewed vigour and courage, as shall clearly prove a Divine interposition in their favour, and the power of that religion within them which is the spiritual life of man, the life derived from the spirit of God, and consisting in the resemblance of the Divine life. This renewed vigour shall fill the spectators with great fear.

For a considerable time before this revival, Christians

tians shall appear as scattered individuals, and for a short time shall scarcely be found as individuals; but at that time, they shall appear in such numbers, and meet with such countenance from civil powers, that they shall ascend up to heaven; that is, appear in the form of a constituted church. As many imperfections shall cleave to that church for a considerable time; as it shall meet with much opposition and many difficulties; and as, during the whole remainder of this period, its purity and lustre shall be far inferior to those, to which the church of Christ shall arrive in the succeeding period, it is said to ascend to heaven in a cloud. Their appearance now shall be such as shall be visible to their enemies.

For the preceding three years and an half, their enemies thought that there was not a single Christian in the world; they imagined that they had totally destroyed them by fire and sword: But even then there were some true Christians in the world, some scattered individuals marked with this seal of God, "that God knew them to be his, and "that they named the name of Christ and departed "from evil;" but now when they shall appear as a constituted and established church, they shall be visible to their very enemies, and an unpleasant sight to them.

In the same hour that Christians shall revive and appear as a constituted church, there shall be

a great earthquake, that is, a great revolution in the Roman empire. The effects of that revolution are enumerated. First, "the tenth part of the city fell." In chap. xvi. 18, 19, 20, 21. we shall meet with an earthquake, in which the whole city and all the cities of the nations shall fall. That revolution shall happen at the end of this period, when Babylon the great shall fall. But the one mentioned in this passage, was to take place, not long after the middle of this period, and in it only a tenth part of the city, that is, of the Roman empire, should fall, or revolt from the obedience of Papal Rome. Whether by the tenth part of the city, a precise tenth part of the Roman empire is meant, or whether the tenth part is a symbolical expression borrowed from the law of tithes among the Jews is not very clear to me; but which ever of these is the meaning of the phrase, the import of the prediction will be very nearly the same. If the first of these is the sense of the expression, then it is a prediction that that revolution shall not overthrow the whole of the Roman empire, but that only a tenth part of it shall then revolt from the Papal dominion. If the second is its meaning, then it is a prediction that that part of the Roman empire, which shall then revolt may be compared to the tithes under the law; first, because it is nearly a tenth part of the whole empire; and secondly, because it is, in consequence

consequence of this tribute acknowledging the sovereignty of God, that the rest of the empire is preserved to its possessor; and third, because that same God who had taken away the tenth, can take away the whole when he pleases.

Secondly, in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand. This revolution should not be brought about without war and bloodshed, and seven thousand of the votaries of Rome should be slain in these wars. The number seven signifies what is complete or perfect. Seven thousands; therefore, may probably signify so many thousands as shall completely bring about this revolution. As one plague after another was brought upon the Egyptians and Pharaoh, until he was obliged to acknowledge the finger of God, and, however unwilling, to give way to that revolution by which the Israelites were delivered from slavery; so thousand after thousand of the votaries of Rome shall be slain, until the Roman government shall give way to the revolution, and allow the Christians a peaceable civil and religious establishment, totally independent of Papal tyranny. And,

Thirdly, the remnant were affrighted and gave glory to the God of heaven. The power and tyranny of Papal Rome was so great, before this revolution, that the Papal hierarchy acted as if it feared neither God nor man. It would make concessions to none; it thundered its anathemas a-

gainst the devoted heads of the greatest kings and emperors, tumbled them from their thrones, and dissolved the allegiance of their subjects. But, at this revolution Papal Rome should be afraid; should not dare to insult, nor even to engage in war any longer those who should revolt from her; but should express her fear by concluding a peace with those whom she hated. By this fear thus expressed, she should involuntarily but illustriously display the glory of that God whose kingdom is (heaven) the Christian church. Considering the power and insolence of Rome at that time, it is not easy to suppose a greater display of the glory of God, than that nine tenths of that empire, with the Pope at their head, should be so afraid of the tenth part, which was revolted, as to make a peace with them, and, contrary to their strongest inclination, allow them a religious establishment.

All these predictions have been most exactly fulfilled in the history of the church of Christ, from the year 756 to the present time, so far as the time for their fulfillment is yet come. As this period commenced in the year 756, and is to continue for 1243 years, it must run down to the year 1999, which is 209 years beyond the present 1790. In the year 756, the Pope was vested by Pepin king of France with the temporal dominion of Rome, under the name of the patrimony of St Peter. Notwithstanding the power and influence of Rome,
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there have been some ever since that time to witness for the religion and divinity of Christ as they are taught in the word of God. Even in communion with the church of Rome, there were many individuals, from the beginning of that period to the twelfth century, who adhered to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus, opposed the superstitions of the church of Rome, and loudly called for a reformation of that church, in its doctrine, worship, discipline, head and members, at the risk of excommunication, and even of life itself. In the twelfth century, about the year 1180, those who in communion with the church of Rome had witnessed for the truth, and had in vain struggled for a reformation of that church, were obliged to withdraw from its communion. Then they retired to the vallies of Piedmont situated between the Alps and the Pyrenees, by which almost inaccessible mountains their retreat in these vallies was rendered more safe. There they met with much countenance and protection from the Earl of Thoulouse, in whose principality they lived. They were universally known by the name of Waldenses from Peter Waldo, a very considerable merchant in Lyons, who went out at their head to this retreat from Papal tyranny and superstition. In these vallies they increased to the number of many thousands. The church of Rome began to be alarmed at their numbers, principles,

principles, and worship, and therefore Pope Innocent III. exerted himself to the utmost, either to bring them to the subjection of the church of Rome, or to destroy them. The former, after many artful and threatening attempts, he found impossible; for they were determined rather to seal their testimony to the truth with their blood, than embrace those superstitions of Rome, which they believed in their conscience to be inconsistent with the doctrine, worship, and discipline taught in the word of God. He therefore not only appointed legates to preach against them, but excited the secular princes and common people to destroy them. He published a croisade against them, which occasioned a long war between Simon Earl Montfort General of the Crossbearers, and the Count of Thoulouse their defender. This war was carried on with a perfidy, a barbarity, and a profusion of human blood, in support of the Pope's authority, and in defence of idolatrous worship and doctrine, the very recital of which by the historians of these wars, must fill the mind of every unprejudiced reader with horror and detestation, and oblige him to exclaim, "Is that the religion of truth and peace, which is propagated by such deceit and bloodshed as must shock Heathens, and even barbarians!"

In the 13th century, Dominic a Spaniard by birth, a man of a fiery and impetuous temper,
the

the founder of that infernal court of the inquisition, which is too well known, and whose forms of judicature are too destructive of the natural, the civil, and the religious rights of mankind to be described here, attacked the Waldenses, and on them wrecked the first fury of the inquisitors. Besides the Waldenses, several of whom, notwithstanding the most cruel and long persecutions against them, continued until Luther's days in different parts of the world who were witnesses for the truth. In particular, the famous John Wickliffe, an Englishman, a doctor and professor of divinity at Oxford, taught the religion of the bible in opposition to the superstitions of Popery; exhorted the people to study the sacred scriptures; and also translated into the English language those divine books, to render the knowledge of them more universal. For his attachment to the truth, Wickliffe was prosecuted with the utmost keenness and violence at the court of Pope Gregory XI. This imminent danger he escaped by the interest of the Duke of Lancaster, and some other English peers, who had a high regard for him. He left many followers in England and other countries. In Bohemia, the famous John Hufs and Jerome of Prague, and their followers, appeared in the 15th century.

In the beginning of the 16th century, Luther, Philip Melancthon, Martin Bucer, John Calvin, Zuinglius, Æscolampadius, and the other illustrious reformers appeared; to whom the world hath been so much indebted for the revival of religion, learning, and liberty. To every one who wishes well to religion, learning, and liberty, the memory of these illustrious men will ever be dear.

These reformers were supported by many German princes; but the Pope and the Emperor resolving their destruction, recourse was had to arms, and the war commonly known by the name of Smalcad began. After many engagements, and many negotiations between the Emperor and the Pope on one side, and the Reformers on the other, matters were brought to that situation that the Reformers not only appeared to be defeated, but, which was worse, seemed to withhold their testimony for the truth against the superstitions of Popery. Maurice Duke of Saxony proved perfidious to the Protestants, and invaded the electoral dominions of his uncle John Frederick, while that worthy prince was maintaining against the Emperor the sacred cause of religion and liberty.

In April 1547, the army of John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, was defeated by that of the Emperor, and he himself taken prisoner. Philip Landgrave of Hesse, the other chief of the Protestants, throwing himself on the mercy of the Emperor,

peror, was detained a prisoner by a scandalous violation of a solemn convention. The Protesters and Reformers with great reluctance, however, acquiesced for a time in a certain formulary, as a rule of faith and worship, called *the interim*, drawn up by order of the Emperor, as a rule to both the votaries of Rome and the Reformers, until the matter should be decided by a general council. Pope Julius III. at the importunate solicitations of the Emperor, consented to the assembling a council at Trent for that purpose. In a diet of the empire, which was held at Augsburg in 1551, the greatest part of the princes gave their consent to the convocation of this council. By acquiescing in the *interim*, as a rule of faith and worship, in which none of the errors of Popery were rejected, but some of them only softened in the mode of expression; and by consenting to have their differences determined by a council called by the Pope, and with himself or his legate at its head; they ceased to bear witness against the Papal hierarchy.

Now it was that the two witnesses were dead; now, for the first time, like dead persons, they cease to bear witness to the truth, and to oppose the Papal hierarchy. But these witnesses thus silenced, thus dead as witnesses, rose to life again, to the great astonishment and terror of their enemies, at the end of three years and an half, as pre-

dicted in verse 11. That very Maurice, formerly Duke, now Elector of Saxony, who had acted so perfidious and unjust a part to the protestant reformers, sorry for his former conduct, entered into a confederacy against the emperor, marched a powerful army against him in the year 1552, with such astonishing rapidity and valour, that he surprised Charles at Inspruck, where he lay with a handful of troops in the utmost security. Alarmed and dejected to the highest degree by this sudden and unforeseen event, the emperor was willing to make peace on almost any conditions. Thus terrified he, in a little time, not only concluded at Passau the famous treaty of pacification with the Protestants, but also promised to assemble, in the space of six months, a diet in which all the tumults and dissensions, that had been occasioned by a variety of sentiments in religious matters, should be removed.

The farther account of this diet cannot be expressed in better terms than those, in which the history of it is given by Mosheim, *Hist.* vol. ii. pages 66, and 67,—“The troubles of Germany
“with several other incidents, rendered it impos-
“sible to assemble the diet, which the emperor
“had promised at the pacification of Passau, so
“soon as the period mentioned in the articles of
“that treaty. This famous diet met, however,
“at Augsberg in the year 1555, was opened by
Ferdinand

“ Ferdinand in the name of the emperor, and terminated those deplorable scenes of bloodshed, desolation, and discord, that had so long afflicted both church and state; by that religious peace, as it is commonly called, which secured to the Protestants the free exercise of their religion, and established this inestimable liberty upon the firmest foundations. For after various debates, the following memorable acts were passed on the 25th September: That the protestants, who followed the confession of Augsburg, should be for the future considered as entirely exempt from the jurisdiction of the Roman pontiff, and from the authority and superintendency of the bishops; that they were left at perfect liberty to enact laws for themselves, relating to their religious sentiments, discipline and worship; that all the inhabitants of the German empire should be allowed to judge for themselves in religious matters, and to join themselves to that church, whose doctrine and worship they thought the purest, and the most consonant to the spirit of true Christianity; and that all those who should injure or persecute any person under religious pretexs, and on account of their opinions, should be declared and proceeded against as public enemies of the empire, invaders of its liberty and disturbers of its peace. The difficulties that were to be surmounted, before this equitable

“ decision could be procured, the tedious delibera-
“ tions, the warm debates, the violent animosities
“ and bloody wars, that were necessary to engage
“ the greatest part of the German states, to consent
“ to conditions so agreeable to the dictates of right
“ reason, as well as to the sacred injunctions of
“ the gospel, shew us, in a shocking and glaring
“ point of light, the ignorance and superstition of
“ these miserable times, and stand upon record as
“ one of the most evident proofs of the necessity of
“ the Reformation.”

That the time, when the Protestants, after having subscribed the interim, agreed to the convocation of a general council was the year 1551, is evident from Mosheim, *Hist.* vol. ii. page 64,
“ The greatest part of the princes gave their consent to the convocation of this council, to which
“ also Maurice elector of Saxony submitted upon
“ certain conditions. The emperor then concluded the diet in the year 1551.”

From the end of the 1551, to about the middle of the 1555, is just three years and an half. In the 1552, the emperor had promised that the diet at Augsbourg should be held in six months, which would have been about two years sooner than the predicted time, for the two witnesses to arise to life and stand on their feet. But that God who, without human perception or intention, can, and does overrule all circumstances, to accomplish the purposes

poses of his will in the government of the world, so overruled the disturbances and other circumstances in the empire, that that diet could not be held, and in fact was not held until the year 1555, when the three years and an half, in which the witnesses were silent, were completed.

Now it was that Christians stood upon their feet; now it was that they obtained at once a civil and a religious establishment, independent of Rome. Formerly scattered individuals, they now appear, since the diet of Augsburgh in 1555, an established and visible church. In consequence of the many imperfections which then cleaved and still cleave to that church, and the many difficulties it has still to encounter, it is said to be under a cloud. Among all the reformed churches, it will not be easy to find one so perfectly conformable to the model of Christ's church as given in sacred scripture, or to that pure form in which it shall appear at the end of this period, or so totally free from contempt and injuries that it cannot be said that a cloud hangs over it. And probably there are few reformed churches in which, notwithstanding the thicker or thinner cloud which hangs over them, there are not many individual persons who are real Christians, God's sealed ones, whom he knows to be his, who name the name of Christ and depart from evil.

The

The Reformation was brought about by wars, in which many thousands of the votaries of Rome were slain, and by which the Pope and his adherents were intimidated. At the Reformation, so many kingdoms shook off their subjection to Rome, that a tenth part of the Roman empire rebelled. For instance, England, Scotland, Ireland, many German principalities, Switzerland, Holland, and many other parts of the western world, at this time shook off their subjection to Rome, both in civil and religious matters. Thus a great revolution took place. In consenting to allow the Protestants a civil and a religious establishment independent of Papal Rome, that hierarchy declared how much it was afraid, and it gave glory to that God who by such weak and unlikely instruments, and in spite of such powerful and keen enemies, had restored, established, and supported his church in the world.

From the Reformation to the present day, the Christians have appeared in the form of established churches, but churches neither so pure nor so prosperous that it can be said that no cloud hangs over them. From that day to this, there have been witnesses for the truth as it is in Jesus, whom neither favours nor frowns have been able to pervert or silence.

These facts are all recorded by Mosheim in his history, Dupin in his history on these centuries, Jean Paul Perrin in his history of the Waldenses, the

the illustrious historian of our own country, Dr Robertson, in his history of Charles the Fifth, Emperor of Germany, and Sleidan's history of the Reformation. The accounts of them given by these historians are too long to be transcribed into this commentary; to these histories I must therefore refer my readers. But for the information of those who have not access to them, I shall transcribe a very few of these passages from Mosheim's Church History.

Mosheim, *Hist.* vol. i. cent. xi. page 525. "Notwithstanding all this, we find from the time of Gregory VII. several proofs of the zealous efforts of those, who are generally called by the Protestants, *the Witnesses of the Truth*, by whom are meant, such pious and judicious Christians as adhered to the pure religion of the gospel, and remained uncorrupted amidst the growth of superstition, who deplored the miserable state to which Christianity was reduced by the alteration of its divine doctrines, and the vices of its profligate ministers, who opposed with vigour the tyrannic ambition both of the lordly pontiff and aspiring bishops; and in some provinces privately, in others openly, attempted the reformation of a corrupt and idolatrous church, and of a barbarous and superstitious age. This was indeed bearing witness to the truth in the noblest manner, and it was principally in Italy and France

“ France that the marks of this heroic piety were
“ exhibited.”

Vol. i. page 615. cent. xii. “ Of all the sects
“ that were in this century, none was more dis-
“ tinguished by the reputation it acquired by the
“ multitude of its votaries, and the testimony
“ which its bitterest enemies bore to the probity
“ and innocence of its members, than that of the
“ Waldenses, so called from their parent and foun-
“ der Peter Waldus.—The origin of this famous
“ sect was as follows. Peter an opulent merchant
“ of Lyons, surnamed Valdensis or Validifius from
“ Vaux or Waldum, a town in the marquisate of
“ Lyons, being extremely zealous for the advance-
“ ment of true piety and Christian knowledge,
“ employed a certain priest about the year 1160
“ in translating from Latin into French the four
“ Gospels, with other books of holy scripture, and
“ the most remarkable sentences of the antient
“ doctors, which were so highly esteemed in this
“ century. But no sooner had he perused these
“ sacred books with a proper degree of attention,
“ than he perceived that the religion which was
“ now taught in the Roman church differed totally
“ from that which was originally inculcated by
“ Christ and his apostles. Struck with this glaring
“ contradiction between the doctrines of the pontiffs
“ and the truths of the gospel, and animated with
“ a pious zeal for promoting his own salvation
and

“ and that of others, he abandoned his mercantile
“ vocation, distributed his riches among the poor ;
“ forming an association with other pious men
“ who had adopted his sentiments and his turn of
“ devotion, he began in the year 1180 to assume
“ the character of a public teacher, and to instruct
“ the multitude in the doctrines and precepts of
“ Christianity. The archbishop of Lyons, and the
“ other rulers of the church in that province op-
“ posed with vigour this new doctor in the exer-
“ cise of his ministry. But their opposition was
“ unsuccessful; for the purity and simplicity of
“ that religion which these good men taught, the
“ spotless innocence that shone forth in their lives
“ and actions, and the noble contempt of riches
“ and honours which was conspicuous in the whole
“ of their conduct and conversation, appeared so
“ engaging to all such as had any sense of true
“ piety, that the number of their disciples and
“ followers increased from day to day. They ac-
“ cordingly formed religious assemblies, first in
“ France, and afterwards in Lombardy; from
“ whence they propagated their sect throughout
“ the other provinces of Europe with an incredi-
“ ble rapidity, and with such invincible fortitude,
“ that neither fire nor sword, nor the most cruel
“ inventions of merciless persecution could damp
“ their zeal or entirely ruin their cause. The at-
“ tempts of Peter Waldus and his followers were

“neither employed nor designed to introduce
 “new doctrines into the church, nor to propose
 “new articles of faith to Christians. All they aim-
 “ed at, was to reduce the form of ecclesiastical go-
 “vernment, and the lives and manners both of the
 “clergy and people, to that amiable simplicity
 “and that primitive sanctity that characterised
 “the apostolic age, and which appear so strongly
 “recommended in the precepts and injunctions of
 “the divine Author of our holy religion.”

Vol. i page 794, cent. xv. “In England and
 “Scotland, the disciples of Wickliffe, whom the
 “multitude had stigmatised with the odious title
 “of Lollards, continued to inveigh against the
 “despotic laws of the pontiffs, and the licentious
 “manners of the clergy. The Waldenses, though
 “persecuted and oppressed on all sides, and from
 “every quarter, raised their voices, even in the
 “remote vallies and lurking places, whither they
 “were driven by the violence of their enemies,
 “and called aloud for succour to the expiring
 “cause of religion and virtue.”

From the present day to the year 1999, the end
 of this period, the church of Christ shall continue
 not merely as scatered individuals, but also as a
 constituted and visible church. Its imperfections
 and troubles, during that time, shall shew that
 a cloud hangs over it. Since the reformation in
 the sixteenth century, all things shall go on so
 much

much in a regular and gradual course, that none of the imperfections which cleave to the church, and none of the troubles to which it shall be exposed, shall bring about another revolution in it until the end of that period.

It is highly probable that the limits of the Christian church shall be enlarged, and that the clouds of imperfections and troubles which hang over it shall become thinner with a motion accelerated in proportion as the end of this period approaches. At the end of it, there shall be a great and glorious revolution to the church of Christ, and a total overthrow of the Papal hierarchy.

In chap. viii. 13. three woes were denounced upon the votaries and citizens of Rome, (the inhabitants of the earth.) In chap. ix. the fifth and sixth angel predicted two of them. We are now assured that the second wo is past, and that the third wo cometh quickly. Ταχυ, the word in the original which is translated quickly, does not signify soon or immediately after the second wo, but it signifies suddenly or unexpectedly and rapidly. It signifies that that wo shall come at an unexpected hour; that the complete deliverance of the church, and overthrow of Antichrist shall come at an unexpected hour; like a thief in the night. The prediction of this revolution is contained in this chapter from verse 15th to the end of it.

Verses 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th.—And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great, and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple, the ark of his testament: And there were lightnings, and voices, and thundings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

This seventh angel shall sound in the year 1999.
In chap. x. 7. John is commanded to seal up
the

the seven, that is, the complete and final thunders or wars, "for the time for them is not yet: But "in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, "when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of "God shall be finished." The finishing of that mystery, which consists in the downfall of Antichrist, and in the bringing in the fulness of the Gentiles, with God's ancient people the Jews, to the purity of the Christian faith, cannot take place so long as the church of Christ is like two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, as the beast makes war with them, as the church is like the temple and the altar only, whilst the outer court is left out, and the holy city is given to the Gentiles; but all these are to continue for 1243 years, after the year 756, which runs down to the year 1999: hence the seventh angel, who introduces all these events, which finish the mystery of God, cannot sound until that year.

This seventh angel who sounds the seventh trumpet, is cotemporary with the seventh angel, who pours out the seventh vial, as in chap. xvi. 17.—21. That they are cotemporary, and that they both predict events, which shall happen in the year 1999, and which shall be completed in the end of that year, shall be fully shewn in the commentary on chapters xiii. and xvi. Let it only be observed here, that they both predict events, which, in their own nature, must be cotemporary.

temporary. The seventh trumpet foretels the complete triumph of Christ's church; and the seventh vial foretels the final downfall of Antichrist. The one of these cannot happen before, nor be delayed after the other. The complete defeat of an enemy, and the triumph of the conqueror must always be cotemporary.

In chap. xi. 3. the two witnesses shall prophesy 1260 days in sackcloth; verse 2d, the Gentiles shall tread the holy city under foot for 42 months; and in chapter, xiii. 5. power is given to the beast to continue 42 months: but, as was formerly shewn, all these numbers signify the same space of time, even 1243 solar years, which all commence at the year 756, and therefore must all terminate in the year 1999.

The seventh trumpet foretels the complete triumph of Christ's church, but as that is cotemporary with the final overthrow of Antichrist, it gives also striking intimations of that overthrow. And the seventh vial which foretels the final overthrow of Antichrist, gives for the same reason striking intimations of the triumph of Christ's church.

In the seventh vial, the principal things predicted are voices, thunderings, lightnings, a great earthquake; Babylon the great coming in remembrance before God, and receiving from him the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; a great hail falling upon men, and men blaspheming

ing God. In the seventh trumpet all these things are particularly mentioned, though they are not the principal things predicted by it. Thus it is said under that trumpet, "the nations were angry, the wrath of God is come, and the time that he should destroy them who destroy the earth; and that there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." And the chief things predicted in the seventh trumpet are, that the mystery of God is finished; (for it was to be finished in the days of the seventh angel, and the seventh angel was to introduce the third wo, and the introduction to this trumpet is, "the second wo is past, and the third wo cometh quickly;") that there were great voices in heaven, that the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and that the temple of God was opened in heaven. In the seventh vial all these are particularly mentioned. The Judge says, "Behold, I come as a thief." There was a great voice out of the temple in heaven saying, It is done, the cities of the nations as well as great Babylon fell, and the mountains were not found. Mountains, as was formerly shewn, signify kings.

Having thus fixed the time to which this seventh trumpet relates, and also suggested so many considerations, as in the mean time may satisfy the candid reader that this trumpet is cotemporary

porary with the seventh vial; let us proceed to consider the import of the predictions which it contains.

This trumpet contains a wo, the third and last wo; a wo not to the church of Christ, (the heaven), but to the votaries and citizens of the Roman empire, the inhabitants of the earth, as is evident from chap. viii. 13. This trumpet predicting the final overthrow of Papal Rome and the complete triumph of the church of Christ, must contain the greatest and last wo to the votaries of Rome. Either of these events would have distressed them more than tongue can express; the two together must occasion a distress too great for us at present to figure.

This wo is to come (ταχυ) quickly. The arrogance, pride, self-confidence and vain claim to infallibility of Papal Rome shall hinder her from perceiving the approach of her complete overthrow until it is just at hand. With respect to the unexpectedness and rapidity of this overthrow, God says, chap. xvi. 15. "Behold, I come as a thief in the night."

This trumpet which brings the last wo upon the Roman empire, (the inhabitants of the earth), brings praise and triumph to heaven, the church of Christ. "For there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ,
" and

“and he shall reign for ever and ever.” Then Christians in the church of Christ shall lift up their voices aloud, and in triumph proclaim the purity, prosperity, and extent of Christ’s spiritual kingdom, in such a manner that no part of the world shall be ignorant of the proclamation, or willing and able to gainsay it. Then all the kingdoms, which Daniel foretold should arise and fall in the world before the kingdom of Christ should extend over the whole world, shall have fallen, and that kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, which is not meats and drinks, but truth and righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, shall extend over the whole earth. Then all the particular kingdoms and churches, which shall be erected in the world, for the civil and religious government of men in society, shall be formed on these principles of truth, righteousness, peace, and joy, which form the constitution of the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. From that time forth, so long as this world stands, Christ’s church shall reign in triumph; no kingdom shall again rise up to persecute and oppress it with success, as Rome Heathen and Papal had done before that period, and its purity and triumph shall be for ever and ever in the heavenly world.

The language of the 15th verse clearly teaches the divinity of Christ. It is said, “The kingdoms
 • “of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord

“and of his Christ, and *He* shall reign for ever
“and ever.” Though it is said the kingdoms of
this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord
and of his Christ, it is not added, and *they* shall
reign, which must have been the only proper ex-
pression if our Lord and his Christ had been essen-
tially different from each other, but it is said, “and
“*He* shall reign,” which can be proper language
on no other account than that which is stated by
Christ himself, when he says, John x. 30. “I and
“my Father are one.”

The glory of this triumphant state of Christ's
kingdom is described in a very particular and full
manner in chapters xix. xx. xxi. and a part of
xxii. and shall be illustrated in the commentary
on these chapters. On this glorious occasion, the
true church of Christ, represented by the twenty-
four elders, with the most profound humility and
devotion, and the warmest gratitude, shall adore and
praise God as the self-existent, omnipresent, and
omnipotent Being, whose perfect knowledge of
all times and places, and whose supreme power, are
now fully illustrated by the exact accomplishment
of all the predictions in this book, concerning the
state of the world at large, of his church in par-
ticular, and of its triumphant state in this world in
an especial manner. Now they adore that fore-
knowledge of God which perceives with certainty,
and that powerful providence of his which overrules
all

all events, even the most contingent, to fixed and determinate ends, without doing violence to the liberty of moral agents and accountable creatures. They praise God, because he hath taken his great power and hath reigned: Then it shall appear, that the church of Christ hath been supported by a divine power, and that therefore it hath finally prevailed over the opposition of devils and wicked men.

This interposition of God in establishing Christ's kingdom over the whole world is called *his great power*, that is, in the symbolical language, the exertion of his power in favours of the church of Christ, of which all his former exertions were only types. However great, gracious, and many have been the exertions of divine power in favours of the church of Christ, all these shall not only be greatly exceeded by that one which shall overthrow Antichrist, bind Satan, and establish and perpetuate the reign of truth, righteousness, peace and joy over the whole earth, but by that one, their true intention, and the hand that performed them, shall be rendered much more visible than they were before that period. Then the kingdom of God shall come, and it shall then be evident that his is the power which hath brought about that period, and that the whole shall illustriously display his glory. At that time, the nations of the earth shall be angry to see all their

attempts to banish the true, pure, spiritual, holy, and simple religion of Jesus from the earth, vain. It shall vex them to see this religion and its votaries triumphant, both of whom they had long treated with such contempt. Then the wrath of God shall in heavy judgements fall upon those nations who, by contemning his religion, would not have Christ to reign over them, nor over the world, if they could have prevented his reign. Then the prediction in Psalm ii. 1,—9. concerning such kings and people shall be accomplished.

At this period, ample justice shall be done to the characters and memory of the dead ; that is, of the martyrs who, both under heathen and papal Rome, sealed their testimony to the truth with their blood. Until that period shall come, their principles, motives and characters, shall be misrepresented by the greatest part of mankind ; and though their murderers, as individuals, must have felt the wrath of God, for the injuries which they did to them, yet till then their blood shall not be fully avenged on the collective body of the Roman state which persecuted them to death. Those, who were put to death by Rome in its heathen state, were misrepresented by the heathens as contemners of the gods, enemies to Cæsar, and disturbers of the public peace. Whilst papal Rome built their tombs, garnished their sepulchres, and even worshipped them as mediators between God
and

and man, they persecuted to death, and branded with the name of *heretics*, those who in their day bore the same testimony to Jesus and to the word of God. The memories of those, who suffered in both periods have often been and still are branded by many for their weakness, folly, enthusiasm, bigotry and obstinacy. In every age and country, those who have no fixed principles of religion; those who disbelieve or doubt Divine revelation; those who in the pride of their understandings would much rather think wrong, than think with the bulk of mankind; and those whose hopes are confined to this world, and the things of this world, the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life; who alas! are always too great a proportion of mankind, treat their memory with contempt. But then, when that religion, for which these martyrs suffered, shall become universal and triumphant; when superstition shall be destroyed, and Satan bound up from tempting men; when they shall judge impartially, coolly, and attentively, they shall admire the discernment, the piety, and the firmness of these excellent men, of whom the world was not worthy, who perceived, loved, obeyed, and adhered to the truth, amid so much ignorance, infidelity, superstition, wickedness, and persecution. Then they shall highly respect the memory of those independent and generous men, who feared God, and had no
other

other fear, and who, at the price of their property, liberty, fame, and blood, transmitted the knowledge of truth and virtue, not merely to an ungrateful posterity, but also to those very enemies who crucified their bodies, and still crucify their memories.

“The time of the dead that they should be judged,” has a reference to a requisition made by those, who were slain as martyrs under Papal Rome, and to the answer which was given to it, as in chap. vi. 9.—11. They were not to be judged, and their blood was not to be avenged on the citizens of Rome, until those of their brethren, who should be slain as they were, should all be killed, that is, those Christians who should be killed as martyrs by Papal Rome. But now when papal Rome is totally destroyed, and when the church of Christ is rendered triumphant, the number of their brethren the martyrs is fulfilled, and the time is come, when, even in this world, ample justice shall be done to their memories, and that empire which killed them shall be judged and punished in its public capacity; at this period, the state of religion and of the world at large shall do justice and honour, not only to the memory of those worthy men who suffered for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus; but it shall also vindicate the character of the prophets of God, and of all the true worshippers of God of every age,

age, country, rank, or situation in the world. Then, by the most exact and evident accomplishment of their predictions in the events, it shall be proven, beyond all contradiction, that Daniel, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Paul, Peter, and John, were all true prophets of God. Then it shall fully appear, that all the true worshippers of God were wise, pious, and holy, such as pursued that course, which was the best and the wisest for themselves, and for society. Then, it shall appear, that in them the fear of the Lord was wisdom, and to depart from evil was understanding. Then, a just and high respect shall be paid to the memory of all the saints of God, of all who in the preceding period were holy, and whose holiness proceeded from the best of principles, the fear of the Lord, whatever their rank in the world hath been. Then, the worth of character shall not be estimated by rank, or any external thing which a foolish and wicked man may possess, and without which a man may be wise, good, truly great and happy, but by those qualities which constitute real worth of character, which are inseparable from a wise, good, truly great and happy man, and which depend not on rank or situation. The saints shall be respected as the excellent ones of the earth, and the righteous as more excellent than his neighbour.

At that period, "God shall destroy them, who
"destroy the earth." By those who destroy the earth

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is meant the papal hierarchy, which shall then destroy the Roman empire. Perhaps some may imagine, that the destroyers of heaven (the church of Christ) would have been a more just character of the papal hierarchy, than the destroyers of the earth (Roman empire) is. A just attention to this matter, will satisfy every candid and intelligent person of the contrary. The words translated, "them who destroy the earth," are in the original *τοις διαφθειροντας την γην*. The verb *διαφθείρω* signifies "to destroy completely by corrupting." The verb *θίρω* to destroy by corrupting, when compounded with the preposition *δια*, signifies "to destroy completely." The design of Rome was to destroy the church of Christ; but she failed in the execution of this design, because she could not corrupt that church, which firmly adhered to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus. But Rome corrupted her own votaries with her errors and superstitions, and thus not only led many individuals blindfold to destruction; but, by these corruptions also gradually shook the pillars of her own government, and shall at last totally overturn their very foundations. The design of the devil and of the bishop of Rome was to destroy the church of Christ, by the floods of errors which they poured out upon the earth; but the church of Christ was unhurt by them, whilst the votaries of Rome imbibed them to their own destruction.

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This is plainly predicted in chap. xii. 15, 16, as shall be shewn in the commentary on these verses; and it hath also been verified in the history of the real church of Christ, and in that of the church of Rome. By her corruptions, relative to indulgences and other superstitions, Rome shook the pillars of her government, in the 16th century, at the glorious æra of the reformation. By her corruptions, she hath frequently alarmed and roused different kingdoms in Europe, who have greatly curtailed the extent of her territory, power, and domination. In the course of Divine providence, her own corruptions shall be so overruled, as to complete her total destruction at the period referred to in this passage. They shall then draw upon her the vengeance of certain surrounding temporal powers; and the cup of her iniquity, then filled up, shall draw upon her the judgements of that God, who shall destroy them, who destroy the earth.

The nature, manner and means of this destruction are particularly predicted in chapters xvi. and xvii. and shall be explained in the commentary upon these. At that period, "the temple of God shall be opened in heaven." As the tabernacle or moveable tent was the stated place of public worship among the Jews, during their pilgrimage, wanderings, and persecutions in the wilderness;

and the temple built on mount Zion at Jerusalem, was the stated place of public worship for them, during their settled and triumphant state in the land of promise: Hence, in the symbolical language, the tabernacle signifies the wilderness, or persecuted state of the Christian church, for the period of the reign of the beast, from the year 756 to the year 1999; and the temple signifies the peaceful, settled, and triumphant state of the church, which shall commence in the year 2000, and continue for a thousand years. In this sense, the tabernacle is used, chap. xiii. 6. In reference to this state of the church, the woman is said to fly unto the wilderness, chap. xii. 14.

In this verse the temple being opened in heaven, signifies that then the settled and triumphant state of the church shall commence. In this sense the temple is used, as shall appear in the commentary, in chapters xiv. 15. and xv. 5, 6, 8. This settled and triumphant state of the church is particularly described in chapters xx. and xxi. and shall be considered at full length in the commentary on these chapters. It is remarkable that that period of purity, peace, and triumph, is represented in chapter xx. to be of 1000 years continuance, and also that from the time when the building of the temple was finished to the birth of Christ was also 1000 years, so that as on other accounts,

counts, in respect of its duration, the temple is the symbol of this triumphant state of the church. In this hieroglyphic, particular notice is taken of one chief circumstance in that prosperous period : “ And there was seen in his temple the ark of his “ testament.” The ark of the testament was a small chest, plated with gold, in which was laid up the testimony of God, that is, the two tables of the moral law of God originally promulgated on mount Sinai. It was placed in the innermost apartment of the tabernacle and afterwards of the temple, called the most holy place. On the top of this ark were placed the mercy-seat and the two cherubim ; here it was that God manifested himself and his will, in the oracular responses which he made to the high priests when they consulted the oracle of God. The reader may see a particular account of the ark of the testament or testimony in Exodus, xxv. 10,—22, 1 Kings viii. 1,—11, and 2 Chron. v. 1,—10.

The plain meaning of this hieroglyphic is, that, at that period, the church of Christ shall appear in a state of peace, triumph, and magnificence. It shall no longer be a tabernacle, but it shall be a temple : Not a temple like the worldly grandeur of the church of Rome, in the preceeding period, not one of human contrivance and execution, like the vain pageantry of heathen temples ;

but the temple of God, a church whose ornaments are those pure and simple doctrines of truth and grace, which came from God, are worthy of God, and calculated to lead men to God. Then Christians shall not be amused, deceived, and perverted, by mere external observances without communion with God, by false atonements and mediators, and by papal bulls in place of the commandments of God; but they shall see the mercy-seat guarded by the cherubim; they shall obtain just views of and repose a just confidence in the mercy of God through the mediation of Christ, that mercy which is guarded by justice, and that justice which is the brightest display of Divine mercy. Now they shall clearly see that God is just, even while he is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. They shall look unto, and regard the testimony of God contained in those sacred scriptures, which are given by inspiration of God as the only infallible standard of their faith, profession, worship, and practice. Notwithstanding all the interest and inclination which infidels, sceptics, superstitious and wicked persons have had to corrupt or destroy these sacred scriptures, and the many attempts which they have made for these impious and mad purposes, it shall then appear that the inspired scriptures have been preserved as safe, by the superintendency of Divine providence,

dence, from destruction and from any material corruption, as if, like the law given upon mount Sinai, they had been laid up in a golden chest for preservation. In every religious exercise, they shall enjoy communion with God. They shall worship, in spirit and in truth, the one God only through the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. They shall pray without ceasing. They shall ask of God in prayer only according to his will, and he shall hear them. The law of God shall be written upon their hearts. "They shall not teach every one his neighbour, "saying know the Lord;" but they shall all know God from the highest to the lowest. Loving the Lord with all their heart, soul, strength, and mind, and hating every false and wicked way with a perfect hatred, it shall be as their meat and drink to do the will of God; and God shall be the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever.— In every outward situation they shall rejoice in the Lord, and joy in the God of their salvation,

"And there were lightnings, and voices, and "thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail." This part of the hieroglyphic is descriptive of a revolution in the earth or Roman empire, (an earthquake) which shall be brought about by a great storm, that is, by a great war. Along with this storm mention is made of voices: By this part
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of the hieroglyphic, it is signified, that a distinct and articulate meaning shall be conveyed to men, by those wars which shall bring about this great revolution. So many circumstances shall concur in them, as shall plainly point them out as those wars by which Papal Rome shall be overthrown, according to the predictions of this book. Hence these wars shall declare, as with an articulate voice, that the time is just at hand when the last and greatest revolution shall take place in Rome; when Antichrist shall be destroyed; the Roman power, seat of government, and name, shall come to an end; and the mystery of God in the final overthrow of Papal Rome and complete triumph of Christianity shall be finished under the sound of the seventh trumpet.

This revolution, by which Papal Rome shall be totally overthrown in the end of the year 1999, and the wars by which it shall be brought about, are particularly described in chap. xvi. 12,—21. and shall be explained in the commentary on these verses. Here they are mentioned only as it were by the by. But being the principal subjects of the sixth and seventh vials, they are treated at full length under them. It was proper to mention, and only to mention them here, because the subject of this trumpet is the beginning of the triumph of Christianity over all opposition; but
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this triumph could not commence until Antichrist should be overthrown; and therefore the wars and revolutions, by which this overthrow shall be accomplished, coinciding in point of time with the commencement of this triumph, it was necessary that this intimation should be given of them in this place.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.